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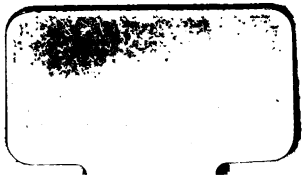

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VOL. II.

"OF IDEAS OF BEAUTY,"

AND

"OF THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY."

BY JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.,

HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD; HONORARY FELLOW OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD; AND SLADE PROFESSOR OF FINE ART, OXFORD.

. . . . . "Accuse me not
Of arrogance, ...
If, having walked with Nature,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their Divinity
Revolts, offended at the ways of men.
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe,
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence."

WORDSWORTH.

RE-ARRANGED IN TWO VOLUMES, AND REVISED BY THE AUTHOR.

VOL. I.

GEORGE ALLEN,

SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.

1883.

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PREFACE.

MY reasons for this carefully revised reprint of the second volume of "Modern Painters," after so often declaring that I would reprint none of the book except the pieces relating to natural history, are given in the eighth number of "Deucalion": and I will only say farther here, that many and many a time during the revision, I wished I had persisted in my old resolution; not in the mere wounded vanity of an old author looking back on his earliest essays, but in much shame, and some indignation, at finding the most solemn of all subjects of human thought handled at once with the presumption of a youth, and the affectation of an anonymous writer.

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But that the confession of faults might be complete, I have made no attempt to amend the text. Not a word is omitted; and, I believe, only three or four changed, which were too obscure, or evidently at the time inadvertent. A few, now useless, notes, referring to buildings since destroyed, or pictures carried away from their homes to Berlin or St. Petersburg, have been cancelled,—and a few pedantic ones shortened; while the parts of the text which needed definite contradiction, or correction, have been dealt with as they occurred, in notes distinguished from the old ones by being placed within marks of parenthesis.

To the addenda given in the former second edition I have subjoined a little piece of autobiography, which explains the peculiar temper in which the whole book was written: and it remains for me here, only to give such general account of its contents as may enable

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the reader to make what use of them may seem best to him.

Its first great assertion is, that beautiful things are useful to men because they are beautiful, and for the sake of their beauty only; and not to sell, or pawn—or, in any other way, turn into money. This, the beginning of all my political economy, is very sufficiently established in the opening chapter.

It then proceeds to ask—What makes anything beautiful, or ugly, in itself? implying therefore that positive beauty, and positive ugliness, are independent of anybody's taste. This, parenthetically, it proceeds to prove; and the parenthetic chapters, (ii. to iv. of the first section,) are again sufficiently pointed and conclusive in their proof.

I next enter on the main task of defining the nature of Beauty itself, and of the faculties of mind which recognise it, and invent. Without analyzing the contents of separate

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chapters, I may at once explain the general theorem of the book by pointing to the passage at page 16 of the old edition (41 of this), ending with, and summed in, the text —"Happy are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" words always understood by me as having reference, like the other Beatitudes, to actual human life, according to the word of Job—"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee;" this revelation being given to Job entirely through the forms and life of the natural world, severally shown him by their unseen Creator. The same confession of faith, after the same instruction, is again uttered by Linnæus in the beginning of the "Systema, (properly *Imperium*) Naturæ:" "Deum sempiternum, immensum, omniscium, omnipotentem, expergefactus, transeuntem * vidi, et obstupui."

* More fully, "a tergo, transeuntem," referring to the vision of Moses, Exodus xxxiii. 22. It may be well to

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"As one awaked out of sleep, I saw the Lord passing by—eternal, infinite, omniscient, omnipotent," and I stood as in a trance.

He does not say 'all-merciful'; the vision, to him, is as that of Eliphaz—"the hair of my flesh stood up"; yet note well, that the terror of Eliphaz, the self-abhorrence of Job, and the awe of Linnæus, are all entirely distinct from the spurious and prurient self-condemnation which is the watchword of modern Protestantism. The *perfect virtue* of Job, of Daniel, and of Noah, is directly, and at length, *asserted by the Deity Him-*

translate here the instantly following expression of the chain of the earth's life, as dependent on the sun, since modern philosophers brandish and bellow this fact about, as, if forsooth, *they* had been the first to discover it! "*I saw* animals dependent on vegetables,—vegetables on things earthly,"—(air and water)—"things earthly on the globe of the earth,—then, by never shaken law, the globe of the earth to revolve round the sun, *from which it has its loan of life.*"

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self, before those three men are taken for His best beloved friends; and the words "Pure in heart" were never, in any place, used by me (and they are referred to again and again through the whole body of my works), or at any moment thought of, by me, as expressing states of religious belief or fantasy, such as modern theological writers suppose to be signified by the "washing of sanctification," or any other parallel phrase of doctrinal mystery; but only the definite human virtue possible to human effort, and *commanded* in the plain words, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and *purify your hearts, ye double-minded.*"

And this should have been much more distinctly stated, together with the general code of ethics founded on that understanding of the text, before I advanced to any argument from it on laws of Art. For much of what I then wrote, and more of what I have

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since written, has been widely and loudly denied, because my readers had wholly different thoughts from mine of what is meant, in the Bible, by Righteousness, and Faith; or in heathen literature by Righteousness, Honour, and Piety. All these virtues imply radically the conception,—they lead ultimately to the revelation*,—of personal and governing Deity: but they begin, practically, and themselves consist to the end,

* Compare 'Eagle's Nest,' Chap. II. § 30: "It is as little the part of a wise man to reflect much on the nature of beings above him, as of beings beneath him. It is immodest to suppose that he can conceive the one, and degrading to suppose that he should be busied with the other. To recognise his everlasting inferiority, and his everlasting greatness; to know himself, and his place; to be content to submit to God without understanding Him; and to rule the lower creation with sympathy and kindness, yet neither sharing the passion of the wild beast, nor imitating the science of the insect,—this you will find is to be modest towards God, gentle to His creatures, and wise for himself."

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in truthful knowledge of *human power* and *human worth;* in respect for the natural claims and feelings of others; and in the precision and thoroughness of our obedience to the primary laws of probity and truth, —"A just ephah, and a just hin;" "Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

This character, intelligently obedient to a moral law common to the Jew and Arab,—the Greek and the Christian,—the past world, the present world, and the world to come,—is assumed here, and in all my other writings whatever, as the *basis* of religion itself,—not religion as the basis of *it*,* and the first condition of true delight in the contemplation of any visible thing, or the conception of any invisible one; for only in this state of mind can we see that anything

* Compare 'Ethics of the Dust,' Lecture vii., p. 133.

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is Good, in the sense that its Creator pronounced it so.

Understanding thus much, and the quantity of careful thought and diligent reading which had led me to such conclusion, but of which it was not my business then to speak, the reader will find that the sentence, "Man's use and purpose," etc., which comes upon him with so startling suddenness in the opening chapter, is yet a most strict and close definition of necessary axiom; though I ought to have led up to it with some preface, and written much of what followed, so that it might still have been acceptable by those who were not prepared to admit the primary statement. In the same way, the use of the word 'Theoria' for 'contemplation,' and the sum of general inferences, by the untranslated quotation from Aristotle (p. 83, old edition, 218 in this), were not so much affectations, as an appeal

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to pre-established authority. For that great sentence of Aristotle's is the conclusion of all the moral philosophy then taught at our universities, and it goes far beyond what I have ever ventured to say myself. I translate it now, thankful that it does so, yet with some demur: "And perfect happiness is some sort of energy of Contemplation, for all the life of the gods is (therein) glad; and that of men, glad in the degree in which some likeness to the gods in this energy belongs to them. For none other of living creatures (but men only) can be happy, since in no way they have any part in Contemplation."

This, as I have said, goes far beyond my own statement; for *I* call any creature 'happy' that can love, or that can exult in its sense of life: and I hold the kinds of happiness common to children and lambs, to girls and birds, to good servants, and good

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dogs, for no less god-like than the most refined raptures of contemplation attained to by philosophers.

It must farther be pointed out, that the use of the Aristotelian word was in some passages of this book necessary, in order to distinguish the mental pleasures taken in beauty from those of the senses, vulgarly now also called from the Greek, "æsthetic." I may, in a moment, illustrate the difference by answering a question often lately asked about me by the æsthetic cliques of London,—why, in the pictures they have seen of my home, there is no attempt whatever to secure harmonies of colour, or form, in furniture. My answer is, that I am entirely independent for daily happiness upon the sensual qualities of form or colour; that, when I want them, I take them either from the sky or the fields, not from my walls, which might be either whitewashed, or painted like a harle-

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quin's jacket, for aught I care; but that the slightest incident which interrupts the harmony of *feeling* and association in a landscape, destroys it all to me, poisoning the entire faculty of contemplation. From my dining-room, I am happy in the view of the lower reach of Coniston Water, not because it is particularly beautiful, but because it is entirely pastoral and pure. Were a single point of chimney of the Barrow ironworks to show itself over the green ridge of the hill, I should never care to look at it more.

It is to be noted, also, that the peculiar form of monastic life, which makes itself eminently comfortable in its cell instead of eminently miserable, is commonly provoked into farther extravagance by pride in its own good taste: while even the more amiable and domestic characters of mind which, for our true comfort and content, dispose us to

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make the most of what we can gather for the decoration of our homes, as chaffinches decorate their nests with lichen, have in these days taken an aspect of peculiar selfishness, in their carelessness of all mischief and suffering in the external world, as long as it is out of sight of the parlour window. I have already casually noticed, in examining certain feelings respecting sublimity in landscape, which I share with Turner and Prout, that one great gift, common to us all, was the accurate sense of comparative magnitudes. This is not a trigonometric, but a tragic power; it indicates a general habit of just comparison and estimate, and means, for me, (answering only here for myself), that I cannot be consoled by a bit of Venetian glass for the destruction of Venice, nor for the destitution of a London suburb by the softness of my own armchair.

Some other points of idiosyncrasy, of which

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count should be taken in tracing the connection of this book with my subsequent writings, are touched upon in the epilogue; and I will only say farther here, that, often repenting as aforesaid, during the labour of revision, my consent to republish so crude an essay, I am in the end satisfied of what is said in the closing pages (154 to 168) of 'Love's Meinie,' touching its usefulness at the present time: and can warrant my reader that whatever may be the shortcoming or over-forcing of its argument, its criticisms will be found permanently trustworthy, and its conclusions inherently secure.

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PART II.

OF IDEAS OF BEAUTY.

SECTION I.

OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY.

CHAPTER I.

*Of the Rank and Relations of the Theoretic Faculty.**

1. ALTHOUGH the hasty execution and controversial tone of the former portions of this essay have been subjects of frequent regret to the writer, yet the one was in some measure excusable in a work referred

* (This sounds very like the "peerage and baronetage" of the Theoretic Faculty; but must stand as it stood, meaning, of course, the place of said faculty with respect to others.)

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to a temporary end, and the other unavoidable in one directed against particular opinions. Nor is either of any necessary detriment to its availableness as a foundation for more careful and extended survey, in so far as its province was confined to the assertion of obvious and visible facts, the verification of which could in no degree be dependent either on the care with which they might be classed, or the temper in which they were regarded. Not so with respect to the investigation now before us, which, being not of things outward, and sensibly demonstrable, but of the value and meaning of mental impressions, must be entered upon with a modesty and cautiousness proportioned to the difficulty of determining the likeness, or community, of such impressions, as they are received by different men; and with seriousness proportioned to the importance of rightly regarding those faculties over which we have moral power, and

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therefore in relation to which we assuredly incur a moral responsibility. There is not the thing left to the choice of man to do or not to do, but there is some sort or degree of duty involved in his determination; and by how much the more, therefore, our subject becomes embarrassed by the cross influences of variously admitted passion, administered discipline, or encouraged affection, upon the minds of men, by so much the more it becomes matter of weight and import to observe by what laws we should be guided, and of what responsibilities regardful, in all that we admit, administer, or encourage.

2. Nor indeed have I ever, even in the preceding sections, spoken with levity, though sometimes perhaps with rashness. I have never treated the subject as other than demanding heedful and serious examination, and taking high place among those which justify, as they reward, our utmost ardour and earnest-

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ness of pursuit. That it justifies them, must be my present task to prove; that it demands them, has never been doubted. Art, properly so called, is no recreation; it cannot be learned at spare moments, nor pursued when we have nothing better to do. It is no handiwork for drawing-room tables, no relief of the ennui of boudoirs; it must be understood and undertaken seriously, or not at all.* To advance it men's lives must be given, and to receive it their hearts. "Le peintre Rubens s'amuse à être ambassadeur," said one with whom, but for his own words, we might have thought that effort had been absorbed in power, and the labour of his art in its felicity. "È faticoso lo studio della pittura, e sempre si fa il mare maggiore," said he, who of all men was least

* (I wish the "must" were indeed imperative. The violently increasing number of extremely foolish persons who now concern themselves about pictures, may be counted among the meanest calamities of modern society.)

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likely to have left us discouraging report of anything that majesty of intellect could grasp, or continuity of labour overcome.* But that this labour, the necessity of which in all ages has been most frankly admitted by the greatest men, is justifiable in a moral point of view; that it is not a vain devotion of the lives of men, that it has functions of usefulness addressed to the weightiest of human interests, and that the objects of it have calls upon us which it is inconsistent alike with our human dignity and our heavenward duty to disobey, has never been boldly asserted, nor fairly admitted: least of all is it likely to be so in these days of despatch and display, where vanity, on the one side, supplies the place of that love of art which is the only effective patronage, and, on the other, that of *the incorruptible and earnest pride which no applause, no reprobation, can*

* Tintoret. (Ridolfi, Vita.)

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*blind to its shortcomings, or beguile of its hope.**

And yet it is in the expectation of obtaining at least a partial acknowledgment of this, as a truth decisive both of aim and conduct, that I enter upon the second division of my subject. The time I have already devoted to the task, I should have considered too great; and that which I fear may be yet required for its completion would have been cause to me of utter discouragement, but that the object I propose to myself is of no partial nor accidental importance. It is not now to distinguish between disputed degrees of ability in individuals, or agreeableness in canvases; it is not now to expose the ignorance or defend the principles of party or person; it is to summon the moral energies of the nation to a forgotten duty, to display the

* (One of the best short statements of a true artist's mind which I have ever given).

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use, force, and function of a great body of neglected sympathies and desires, and to elevate to its healthy and beneficial operation that art which, being altogether addressed to them, rises or falls with their variableness of vigour, now leading them with Tyrtæan fire, now singing them to sleep with baby murmurings.

3. Because that with many of us the recommendation of our own favourite pursuits is, I fear, rooted more in conceit of ourselves, than in affection towards others, so that sometimes in our very pointing of the way we had rather that the intricacy of it should be admired than unfolded, whence a natural distrust of such recommendation may well have place in the minds of those who have not yet perceived any value in the thing praised; and because, also, men in the present century understand the word Useful in a strange way, or at least (for the word has been often so

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accepted from the beginning of time) since in these days they act its more limited meaning farther out, and give to it more practical weight and authority; it will be well in the outset, that I define exactly what kind of Utility I mean to attribute to art, and especially to that branch of it which is concerned with those impressions of external Beauty whose nature it is our present object to discover.

4. That is, to everything created pre-eminently useful, which enables it rightly and fully to perform the functions appointed to it by its Creator. Therefore, that we may determine what is chiefly useful to man, it is necessary first to determine the use of Man himself.

Man's use and function (and let him who will not grant me this follow me no farther,*

* (Many readers, in old times, *did* follow me no farther; the passage being indeed offensively aggressive in its pietism, and rude in its brevity. For its better explanation see the preface to this edition.)

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for this I purpose always to assume,) are, to be the witness of the glory of God, and to advance that glory by his reasonable obedience and resultant happiness.

Whatever enables us to fulfil this function is, in the pure and first sense of the word, Useful to us: pre-eminently therefore, whatever sets the glory of God more brightly before us. But things that only help us to exist, are (*only*), in a secondary and mean sense, useful; or rather, if they be looked for alone, they are useless, and worse, for it would be better that we should not exist, than that we should guiltily disappoint the purposes of existence.

5. And yet people speak in this working age, when they speak from their hearts, as if houses and lands, and food and raiment, were alone useful, and as if Sight, Thought, and Admiration * were all profitless, so that men

* "We live by admiration, hope, and love."
—*Excursion*, book iv.

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insolently call themselves Utilitarians, who would turn, if they had their way, themselves and their race into vegetables;* men who think, as far as such can be said to think, that the meat is more than the life, and the raiment than the body; who look to the earth as a stable, and to its fruit as fodder; vine-dressers and husbandmen, who love the corn they grind, and the grapes they crush, better than the gardens of the angels upon the slopes of Eden;† hewers of wood and drawers of water, who think that it is to give them wood to hew and water to draw, that the pine-forests cover the mountains like the shadow of God, and the great rivers move like his eternity. And so comes upon us that Woe of the preacher, that though God "hath made everything beautiful in his time, also he hath set

* (I ought to have said, vegetable manure.)

† (All the same, I wish, myself, that the angels gave us some clearer notion of them.)

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the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end."

6. This Nebuchadnezzar curse, that sends men to grass like oxen, seems to follow but too closely on the excess or continuance of national power and peace. In the perplexities of nations, in their struggles for existence, in their infancy, their impotence, or even their disorganization, they have higher hopes and nobler passions. Out of the suffering comes the serious mind; out of the salvation, the grateful heart; out of endurance, fortitude; out of deliverance, faith: but when they have learned to live under providence of laws and with decency and justice of regard for each other, and when they have done away with violent and external sources of suffering, worse evils seem to arise out of their rest; evils that vex less and mortify more, that suck the blood though they do not shed it, and ossify the

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heart though they do not torture it. And deep though the causes of thankfulness must be to every people at peace with others and at unity in itself, there are causes of fear, also, a fear greater than of sword and sedition: that dependence on God may be forgotten, because the bread is given and the water sure; that gratitude to him may cease, because his constancy of protection has taken the semblance of a natural law; that heavenly hope may grow faint amidst the full fruition of the world; that selfishness may take place of undemanded devotion, compassion be lost in vainglory, and love in dissimulation;* that enervation may succeed to strength, apathy to patience, and the noise of jesting words and foulness of dark thoughts, to the earnest purity of the girded loins and the burning lamp. About the river of human life there is a wintry wind, though a heavenly sunshine; the iris

* Rom. xii. 9.

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colours its agitation, the frost fixes upon its repose. Let us beware that our rest become not the rest of stones, which so long as they are torrent-tossed, and thunder-stricken, maintain their majesty; but when the stream is silent, and the storm past, suffer the grass to cover them, and the lichen to feed on them, and are ploughed down into dust.*

7. And though I believe that we have salt enough of ardent and holy mind amongst us

* I have suffered these passages to remain unaltered, because, though recent events have turned them into irony, they are, perhaps, not undeserving of attention, as having marked, during a period of profound and widely extended peace, some of the sources of the national debasement which, on the continent of Europe, has precipitated its close, and been manifested alike in the dissolution of authority, the denial of virtue, and the unresisted victory of every dream of folly and every shape of sin. (Note of 1856, alluding to the Crimean and other wars. The words "denial of virtue" refer to the physical philosophy of automatic necessity, which has become every day more absurd and mischievous since this was written.)

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to keep us in some measure from this moral decay, yet the signs of it must be watched with anxiety, in all matter, however trivial, in all directions, however distant. And at this time, when the iron roads are tearing up the surface of Europe, as grapeshot do the sea; when their great net is drawing and twitching the ancient frame and strength of England together, contracting all its various life, its rocky arms and rural heart, into a narrow, finite, calculating metropolis of manufactures; when there is not a monument throughout the cities of Europe that speaks of old years and mighty people, but it is being swept away to build cafés and gaming-houses; * when the honour of God is thought to consist in the

* (I cancel the long note, then irrelevant, and now useless, specifying instances of destruction in progress—since irremediably fulfilled. Nearly all that was historically of value in the great cities of Europe, has been swept away by their shopkeepers, since this book was last printed.)

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poverty of his temple, and the column is shortened and the pinnacle shattered, the colour denied to the casement and the marble to the altar, while exchequers are exhausted in luxury of boudoirs and pride of reception-rooms; when we ravage without a pause all the loveliness of creation which God in giving pronounced Good, and destroy without a thought all those labours which men have given their lives, and their sons' sons' lives, to complete, and have left for a legacy to all their kind, a legacy of more than their hearts' blood, for it is of their souls' travail; —there is need, bitter need, to bring back into men's minds, that to live is nothing, unless to live be to know him by whom we live: and that he is not to be known by marring his fair works, and blotting out the evidence of his influences upon his creatures; nor amidst the hurry of crowds and crash of innovation, but in solitary places, and

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out of the glowing intelligences which he gave to men of old. He did not teach them how to build for glory and for beauty, he did not give them the fearless, faithful, inherited energies, that worked on and down from death to death, generation after generation, that we might give the work of their poured-out spirit to the axe and the hammer: he has not cloven the earth with rivers, that their white wild waves might turn wheels and push paddles; nor turned it up under as it were fire, that it might heat wells and cure diseases; he brings not up his quails by the east wind, only to let them fall in flesh about the camp of men; he has not heaped the rocks of the mountain only for the quarry, nor clothed the field only for the oven.

Science and art are either subservient to life, or the objects of it. As subservient to life, or practical, their results are, in the common sense of the word, Useful. As the

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object of life, or theoretic,* they are, in the common sense, Useless. And yet the step between practical and theoretic science is the step between the miner and the geologist, the apothecary and the chemist; and the step between practical and theoretic art is that between the builder and the architect, between the plumber and the artist; and this is a step allowed on all hands to be from less to greater. So that the so-called useless part of each profession does, by the authoritative and right instinct of mankind, assume the more noble place; even though books be sometimes written, and that by writers of no

* (With juvenile vanity I begin using this word in my own peculiar sense, before it is explained to the reader in any sense at all. He must please remember that Theory, from the beginning to the end of this part of "Modern Painters," is used in the sense of contemplation, whenever it is used carefully. Passages may perhaps occur in which I have used the word accidentally in its ordinary sense of 'supposition'; but I will try to catch these in revising.)

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ordinary mind, which assume that a chemist is rewarded for the years of toil which have traced the greater part of the combinations of matter to their ultimate atoms, by discovering a cheap way of refining sugar; and date the eminence of the philosopher whose life has been spent in the investigation of the laws of light, from the time of his inventing an improvement in spectacles.

But the common consent of men admits that whatever branch of any pursuit ministers to the bodily comforts, and regards material uses, is ignoble, and whatever part is addressed to the mind only, is noble: and that geology does better in reclothing dry bones and revealing lost creations, than in tracing veins of lead and beds of iron; astronomy better in opening to us the houses of heaven, than in teaching navigation; botany better in displaying structure than in expressing juices; surgery better in investigating organization

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than in setting limbs.* Only it is ordained that, for our encouragement, every step we make in the more exalted range of science adds something also to its practical applicabilities; that all the great phenomena of nature, the knowledge of which is desired by the angels only, by us partly, as it reveals to farther vision the being and the glory of him in whom they rejoice, and we live, dispense yet such kind influences, and so much of material blessing, as to be joyfully felt by all inferior creatures, and to be desired by them with such single desire as the imperfection of their nature may admit; † that

* (All this, though right, is much too violently expressed —the juvenile vanity again appearing in the desire, to say what might appear strange, in the most striking way; and what might be questioned by many readers, in the most positive way. As I grew older, I more and more respected vulgar uses; and in the 8th chapter of "Deucalion," which I am at present arranging, it will be found that they are regarded as a leading test of rightly systematized science.)

† Hooker, Eccl. Pol. book II. chap. ii. § 2.

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the strong torrents which, in their own gladness, fill the hills with hollow thunder, and the vales with winding light, have yet their bounden charge of field to feed, and barge to bear; that the fierce flames to which the Alp owes its upheaval, and the volcano its terror, temper for us the metal vein and warm the quickening spring; and that, for our incitement,—I say not our reward, for knowledge is its own reward,—herbs have their healing, stones their preciousness, and stars their times.

It would appear, therefore, that those pursuits which are altogether theoretic, whose results are desirable or admirable in themselves and for their own sake, and in which no farther end to which their productions or discoveries are referred can interrupt the contemplation of things as they are, by the endeavour to discover of what selfish uses they are capable, (and of this order are

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painting and sculpture), ought to take rank above all pursuits which have any taint* in them of subserviency to life, in so far as all such tendency is the sign of less eternal and less holy function.† And such rank these two sublime arts would indeed assume in the minds of nations, and become objects of corresponding efforts, but for two fatal and widespread errors respecting the great faculties of mind concerned in them.

The first of these, or the Theoretic faculty, is concerned with the moral perception and appreciation of ideas of beauty. And the error respecting it is, the considering and

* ('Taint' is a false word. The entire system of useful and contemplative knowledge is one; equally pure and holy: its only 'taints' are in pride, and subservience to avarice or destruction; but see the following note.)

† I do not assert that the accidental utility of a theoretic pursuit, as of botany for instance, in any way degrades it, though it cannot be considered as elevating it. But essential utility, a purpose to which the pursuit is in some measure referred, as in architecture, invariably degrades,

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calling it Æsthetic,* degrading it to a mere operation of sense, or perhaps worse, of custom; so that the arts which appeal to it

because then the theoretic part of the art is comparatively lost sight of; and thus architecture takes a level below that of sculpture or painting, even when the powers of mind developed in it are of the same high order.

When we pronounce the name of Giotto, our venerant thoughts are at Assisi and Padua, before they climb the Campanile of Santa Maria del Fiore. And he who would raise the ghost of Michael Angelo must haunt the Sistine and San Lorenzo, not St. Peter's. (This old note already anticipates the subjection of the constructive to the decorative science of architecture which gave so much offence, to architects capable only of construction, in the "Seven Lamps," written two years later, and "Stones of Venice." The obscure sentence about Michael Angelo signifies that he is to be judged by his sculpture and painting —not his dome building, which is true enough—and I wish now very heartily that he had never done anything but domes.)

* (It is one of the principal reasons for my reprinting this book, that it contains so early and so decisive warning against the then incipient folly, which in recent days has made art at once the corruption, and the jest, of the vulgar world.)

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sink into a mere amusement, ministers to morbid sensibilities, ticklers and fanners of the soul's sleep.

The second great faculty is the Imaginative, which the mind exercises in a certain mode of regarding or combining the ideas it has received from external nature, and the operations of which become in their turn objects of the theoretic faculty to other minds. And the error respecting this faculty is, in considering that its function is one of falsehood, that its operation is to exhibit things as they are *not*, and that in so doing it mends the works of God.

Now, as these are the two faculties to which I shall have occasion constantly to refer during that examination of the Ideas of Beauty and Relation on which we are now entering, because it is only as received and treated by these, that those ideas become exalted and profitable, it becomes necessary

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for me in the outset to explain their power, and define their sphere; and to vindicate, in the system of our nature, their true place for the intellectual lens, and moral retina, by which, and on which, our informing thoughts are concentrated and represented.

NOTE.—The reader will probably recollect the two sonnets of Wordsworth which were published at the time when the Bill for the railroad between Kendal and Bowness was laid before Parliament. His remonstrance was of course in vain; and I have since heard that there are proposals entertained for continuing this line to Whitehaven through *Borrowdale*. I transcribe the note prefixed by Wordsworth to the first sonnet.

"The degree and kind of attachment which many of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can scarcely be overrated. Near the house of one of them stands a magnificent tree, which a neighbour of the owner advised him to fell for profit's sake. 'Fell it!' exclaimed the yeoman; 'I had rather fall on my knees and worship it.' It happens, I believe, that the intended railway would pass through this little property, and I hope that an apology for the answer will not be thought necessary by one who enters into the strength of the feeling."

The men who thus feel will always be few, and over-

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borne by the thoughtless avaricious crowd: but is it right, because they are a minority, that there should be no respect for them, no concession to them, that their voice should be utterly without regard in the council of the nation; and that any attempt to defend one single district from the offence and foulness of mercenary uses, on the ground of its beauty and power over men's hearts, should be met, as I doubt not it would be, by total and impenetrable scorn?

(This was, I believe, my first protest against railroads. The 'men who thus feel' are not so few as I then thought, and it has since become every year a more pressing question with me, how the joys and interests of gentle and sensible persons are to be supported against the violence, restlessness and avarice of what I believe to be indeed a minority, though an intensely active and powerful one.)

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CHAPTER II.

Of the Theoretic Faculty as Concerned with Pleasures of Sense.

I PROCEED therefore, first, to examine the nature of what I have called the Theoretic faculty, and to justify my substitution of the term "Theoretic" for "Æsthetic," which is the one commonly (now*) employed with reference to it.

Now the term "æsthesis" properly signifies mere sensual perception of the outward qualities and necessary effects of bodies; in which sense only, if we would arrive at any accurate conclusions on this difficult subject, it should always be used. But I wholly deny that the impressions of beauty are in

* (It was, of course, never so used by good or scholarly English writers, nor ever could be.)

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any way sensual; they are neither sensual nor intellectual, but moral: and for the faculty receiving them, whose difference from mere perception I shall immediately endeavour to explain, no term can be more accurate or convenient than that employed by the Greeks, "Theoretic," which I pray permission, therefore, always to use, and to call the operation of the faculty itself, Theoria.

Let us begin at the lowest point, and observe, first, what differences of dignity may exist between different kinds of æsthetic or sensual pleasure, properly so called.

Now it is evident that the being common to brutes, or peculiar to man, can alone be no rational test of inferiority or dignity in pleasures. We must not assume that man is the nobler animal, and then deduce the nobleness of his delights; but we must prove the nobleness of the delights, and thence the nobleness of the animal. The

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dignity of affection is no way lessened, because a large measure of it may be found in lower animals; neither is the vileness of gluttony and lust abated, because they are common to men. It is clear, therefore, that there is a standard of dignity in the pleasures and passions themselves, by which we also class the creatures capable of, or suffering them.

The first great distinction, we observe, is that noted by Aristotle, that men are called temperate and intemperate with regard to some (pleasures), and not so with respect to others; and that those with respect to which they are so called are, by common consent, held to be the vilest. But Aristotle, though exquisitely subtle in his notation of facts, does not frequently give us satisfactory account of, or reason for them. Content with stating the fact of these pleasures being held the lowest, he shows not why this estimation of

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them is just; and confuses the reader by observing casually respecting the higher pleasures, what is indeed true, but appears at first opposed to his own position, namely, that "in these also men may be conceived as taking pleasure either rightly, or more or less than is right."* Which being so, and evident capability of excess or defect existing in pleasures of this higher order, let us consider how it happens that men are not called intemperate when they indulge in excess of this kind; and what is that difference in nature of the pleasure which diminishes the criminality of its excess.

Men are held intemperate only when their desires *overcome or prevent the action of their reason;* and they are indeed intemperate in the exact degree in which such prevention or interference takes place, and therefore in many instances and acts which

* ὡς δεῖ, καὶ καθ' ὑπερβολὴν καὶ ἔλλειψιν.

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do not lower the world's estimation of their temperance. For so long as it can be supposed that the reason has acted imperfectly, owing to *its own* imperfection, or to the imperfection of the premises submitted to it,—as when men give an inordinate preference to their own pursuits, because they cannot, in the nature of things, have sufficiently experienced the goodness and benefit of others;—and so long as it may be presumed that men have referred to reason in what they do, and have not suffered its orders to be disobeyed through mere impulse and desire, though those orders may be full of error, owing to the reason's own feebleness; so long, men are not held intemperate. But when it is palpably evident that the reason cannot have erred, but that its voice has been deadened or disobeyed; and that the reasonable creature has been dragged dead round the walls of his own citadel by mere

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passion, then, and then only, men are of all held intemperate. And this is evidently the case with respect to inordinate indulgence in pleasures, of touch and taste; for these, being destructive in their continuance not only of all other pleasures, but of the very sensibilities by which they themselves are received, and this penalty being actually known and experienced by those indulging in them, so that the reason cannot but pronounce right respecting their perilousness, there is no palliation of the wrong choice; and the man, as utterly incapable of Will,* is called intemperate, or ἀκόλαστος.

It would be well if the reader would for himself follow out this subject, which it would be irrelevant here to pursue farther, observing, how a certain degree of intemperance is suspected and attributed to men with respect to higher impulses; as, for instance, in the

* Comp. Hooker, Eccl. Pol., book I., chap. viii.

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case of anger, or any other passion criminally indulged; and yet is not so attributed as in the case of sensual pleasures: because in anger the reason is supposed not to have had time to operate, and to be itself affected by the presence of the passion, which seizes the man involuntarily and before he is aware; whereas, in the case of the sensual pleasures, the act is deliberate, and determined on beforehand, in direct defiance of reason. Nevertheless, if no precaution be taken against immoderate anger, and the passions gain upon the man, so as to be evidently wilful and unrestrained, and admitted contrary to all reason, we begin to look upon him as, in the real sense of the word, intemperate; and, in consequence, assign to him his place, for the time, among the beasts, as definitely as if he had yielded to the pleasurable temptations of touch or taste.

5. We see, then, that the primal ground of inferiority in these pleasures is that which

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proves their indulgence to be contrary to reason; namely, their destructiveness upon prolongation, and their incapability of co-existing continually with other delights or perfections of the system. ('With the better delights and true perfections of human nature,' I should have said.)

And this incapability of continuance directs us to the second cause of their inferiority; namely, that they are given to us as subservient to life, as instruments of our preservation, compelling us to seek the things necessary to our being, and that, therefore, when this their function is fully performed, they ought to have an end; and can be only artificially, and under high penalty, prolonged. But the pleasures of sight and hearing are given as gifts. They answer not any purposes of mere existence; for the distinction of all that is useful or dangerous to us might be made, and often is made, by the eye, without its receiving the

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slightest pleasure of sight. We might have learned to distinguish fruits and grain from flowers, without having any superior pleasure in the aspect of the latter; and the ear might have learned to distinguish the sounds that communicate ideas, or to recognize intimations of elemental danger, without perceiving either melody in the voice, or majesty in the thunder.* And as these pleasures have no function to perform, so there is no limit to their continuance in the accomplishment of their end, for they are an end in themselves, and so may be perpetual with all of us; being in no way destructive, but rather increasing in exquisiteness by repetition.

6. Herein, then, we find very sufficient ground for the higher estimation of these

* (Modern philosophy, on the other hand, supposes the colours of flowers to be of no use to *us* at all;—and that a bee couldn't have found its way to a thistle unless the flower had been purple!)

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delights; first, in their being eternal and inexhaustible, and, secondly, in their being evidently no means or instrument of life, but an object of life. Now, in whatever is an object of life, in whatever may be infinitely and for itself desired, we may be sure there is something of divine; for God will not make anything an object of life to his creatures which does not point to, or partake of, himself.* And so though we were to regard the pleasures of sight merely as the highest of sensual pleasures, and though they were of rare occurrence, and, when occurring, isolated and imperfect, there would still be a supernatural character about them, owing to their self-sufficiency. But when, instead of being scattered, interrupted, or chance-distributed,

* (An entirely unwarranted assertion, made evidently without reflection, and on hearsay. The paragraph down to "self-sufficiency" is just as unnecessary as it is insecure. The rest of the page is true, and the proper basis of following argument.)

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they are gathered together, and so arranged to enhance each other as by chance they could not be, there is caused by them not only a feeling of strong affection towards the object in which they exist, but a perception of purpose and adaptation of it to our desires; a perception, therefore, of the immediate operation of the Intelligence which so formed us, and so feeds us.

Out of which perception arise Joy, Admiration, and Gratitude.

Now the mere animal consciousness of the pleasantness, I call 'Æsthesis;' but the exulting, reverent, and grateful perception of it I call 'Theoria.' For this, and this only, is the full comprehension and contemplation of the Beautiful as a gift of God; a gift not necessary to our being, but added to, and elevating it, and twofold: first of the desire, and secondly of the thing desired.

7. And that this joyfulness and reverence

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are a necessary part of Theoretic pleasure is very evident, when we consider that, by the presence of these feelings, even the lower and more sensual pleasures may be rendered Theoretic. Thus Aristotle has subtly noted that "we call not men intemperate so much with respect to the scents of roses or herb-perfumes as of ointments and of condiments," though the reason that he gives for this be futile enough.* For the fact is, that of scents artificially prepared, the extreme desire is intemperance; but of natural and God-given scents, which take their part in the harmony and pleasantness of creation, there can hardly be intemperance: not that there is any absolute difference between the two kinds, but that these are likely to be received with gratitude and joyfulness rather than those; so that we despise the seeking of essences and unguents,

* (I forget what it is: and the reader need not be troubled to find out.)

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but not the sowing of violets along our garden banks. But all things may be elevated by affection, as the spikenard of Mary, and in the Song of Solomon the myrrh upon the handles of the lock, and the sense of Isaac of the field-fragrance upon his son. And the general law for all these pleasures is, that, when sought in the abstract and ardently, they are foul things; but when received with thankfulness and with reference to God's glory, they become Theoretic; and so we may find something divine in the sweetness of wild fruits, as well as in the pleasantness of the pure air, and the tenderness of its natural perfumes that come and go as they list.

8. It will now be understood why it was formerly said in the chapter respecting ideas of beauty, that those ideas were the subject of moral, and not of intellectual, nor altogether of sensual perception; and why I spoke of the pleasures connected with them as derived from

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"those material sources which are agreeable to our moral nature in its purity and perfection." For, as it is necessary to the existence of an idea of beauty, that the sensual pleasure which may be its basis should be accompanied first with joy, then with love of the object, then with the perception of kindness in a superior intelligence, finally, with thankfulness and veneration towards that intelligence itself;* and as no idea can be at all considered as in any way an idea of beauty, until it be made up of these emotions, any more than we can be said to have an idea of a letter of which we perceive the perfume and the fair writing, without understanding the contents of it, or intent of it; and as these emotions are in no way resultant

* (All this is right; and more sincerely and passionately written than its affected manner would permit many readers to believe. It unfortunately affects brevity as well as accuracy, and crowds the statements which should have been successively made and patiently explained, into a single sentence, by some tempers entirely inacceptable.)

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from, nor obtainable by, any operation of the Intellect; it is evident that the sensation of beauty is not sensual on the one hand, nor is it intellectual on the other; but is dependent on a pure, right, and open state of the heart.* (Dependent,) both for its truth and for its intensity, insomuch that even the right after-action of the Intellect upon facts of beauty so apprehended, is dependent on the acuteness of the heart-feeling about them. And thus the Apostolic words come true, in this minor respect, as in all others;—that men are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, having the *understanding* darkened, because of the hardness of their *hearts*, and so, being past feeling, give themselves up to lasciviousness." For we do indeed see constantly that men having

* (I am shorter breathed at sixty-three than I was at six-and-twenty; and am obliged to help myself to a comfortable full-stop, before I can get on with my own sentence.)

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naturally acute perceptions of the beautiful, yet not receiving it with a pure heart, nor into their hearts at all, never comprehend it, nor receive good from it; but make it a mere minister to their desires, and accompaniment and seasoning of lower sensual pleasures, until all their emotions take the same earthly stamp, and the sense of beauty sinks into the servant of lust.

9. Nor is what the world commonly understands by the cultivation of 'taste,' anything more or better than this; at least in times of corrupt and over-pampered civilization, when men build palaces, plant groves, and gather luxuries, that they and their devices may hang in the corners of the world like fine-spun cobwebs, with greedy, puffed-up, spider-like lusts in the middle. And this, which in Christian times is the abuse and corruption of the sense of beauty, was in that Pagan life of which St. Paul speaks, little less than the

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essence of it, and the best they had. I do not know that of the expressions of affection towards external nature to be found among Heathen writers, there are any of which the leading thought leans not towards the sensual parts of her. Her beneficence they sought, and her power they shunned; her teaching through both they understood never. The pleasant influences of soft winds, and ringing streamlets, and shady coverts, of the violet couch and plane-tree shade, they received, perhaps, in a more noble way than we; but they found not anything, except fear, upon the bare mountain, or in the ghostly glen.

10. They loved the Hybla heather* more for its sweet hives than its purple hues. But the

* (In the old edition, "the Hybla heather they loved," because I thought it classical and dignified to put subject before predicate. So above, "her teaching they understood never," with double inversion, verb before adverb. The contents of the paragraph are good, and were developed at length in the third volume.)

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Christian Theoria seeks not, though it accepts and touches with its own purity, what the Epicurean sought; but finds its food and the objects of its love everywhere, in what is harsh and fearful as well as in what is kind: nay, even in all that seems coarse and commonplace, seizing that which is good; and sometimes delighting more at finding its table spread in strange places, and in the presence of its enemies, and its honey coming out of the rock, than if all were harmonized into a less wondrous pleasure: hating only what is self-sighted and insolent of men's work, despising all that is not of God, unless reminding it of God, yet able to find evidence of him still where all seems forgetful of him, and to turn that into a witness of his working which was meant to obscure it; and so with clear and unoffended sight beholding him for ever, according to the written promise, "Blessed are the pure in *heart*, for they shall see God."

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CHAPTER III.

Of Accuracy and Inaccuracy in Impressions of Sense.

(Without giving new headings to chapters, I think it will be useful to mark occasionally for the reader, in simpler terms than he finds in the text, the real progress to its argument.

The first chapter asserts, and I think with sufficient force proves, that the external creation is not merely useful to man as furnishing him with food, but chiefly as giving him subjects of admiration and reflection.

The second chapter asserts (but has not yet attempted to prove) that this creation cannot be rightly admired, nor truly thought of, but as the work and gift of a loving Creator.

The third chapter now enters on the question, what parts or characters of natural things bear most clearly the evidence of having been so created; and by what faculties we discern and prefer them.)

1. HITHERTO we have observed only the distinctions of dignity among pleasures of sense, considered merely as such;

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and the way in which *any* of them may become theoretic in being received with right feeling.

But as we go farther, and examine the distinctive nature of ideas of beauty, we shall, I believe, perceive something in them besides æsthetic pleasure; something which attests a more important function belonging to them than attaches to other sensual ideas, and exhibits a more exalted character in the faculty by which they are received. And this was what I alluded to, when I said in the chapter already referred to (§ 1), that "we may indeed perceive, as far as we are acquainted with the nature of God, that we have been so constructed as in a healthy state of mind to derive pleasure from whatever things are illustrative of that nature."

This point it is necessary now farther to develope.

Our first enquiry must evidently be, how we

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are authorized to affirm of any man's mind, that it is in a healthy state or otherwise respecting impressions of sight; and what canon or test there is by which we may determine of these impressions that they are or are not *rightly* esteemed beautiful. For it does not at first appear easy to prove that men ought to like one thing rather than another: and although this is granted, generally, by men's speaking of 'bad' or 'good' taste, yet the right of individual opinion (sometimes claimed even in moral matters, though then palpably without foundation,) does not appear altogether irrational in matters æsthetic, wherein little operation of voluntary choice is supposed possible. It would appear strange, for instance, to assert, respecting a particular person who preferred the scent of violets to that of roses, that he had no right to do so. And yet, while I have said that the sensation of beauty is intuitive and necessary, as men derive pleasure

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from the scent of a rose, I have assumed that there are some sources from which it is rightly derived, and others from which it is wrongly derived: in other words, that men have no right to think some things beautiful, and no right to remain apathetic with regard to others.

2. Hence then arise two questions, according to the meaning in which the word "right" is taken: the first, in what way an impression of sense may be *deceptive*, and therefore a conclusion respecting it untrue; and the second, in what way an impression of sense, or the preference of one, may be a subject of *will*, and therefore of moral duty or delinquency.

To the first of these questions I answer, that we cannot speak of the immediate impression of sense as false, nor of its preference to others as mistaken; for no one can be deceived respecting the actual sensation he perceives

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or prefers.* But falsity may attach to his assertion or supposition, that what he himself perceives is from the same object perceived by others, or is always to be by himself perceived, or is always to be by himself preferred; and when we speak of a man as wrong in his impressions of sense, we either mean that he feels differently from all, or from a majority, respecting a certain object, or that he prefers

* (I have not sufficiently carried out the analysis here. No note is taken in the passage of diseased conditions of the organs; or imperfect ones; jaundice or colour-blindness are not thought of as affecting the argument. But it is supposed that there may not be exact similarity in sensations, even among healthy and well organized persons, and that when we say we dislike, or like, peppermint or aniseed, it is conceivable that peppermint to some noses may not be exactly the same thing as peppermint to others. It is, however, most rational and simple to assume what is certainly the clearest probability, that the general sensations of humanity are approximately alike; that a taste for garlic or aniseed is an artificially acquired one, and that one for castor oil or asafœtida would only be acquired by great perseverance.)

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at present those of his impressions which ultimately he will not prefer.

To the second I answer, that over immediate impressions and immediate preferences we have no power; but over *ultimate* impressions, and especially ultimate preferences, we have; and that, though we can neither at once choose whether we shall see an object red, green, or blue, nor determine to like the red better than the blue, or the blue better than the red, yet we can, if we choose, make ourselves ultimately susceptible of such impressions in other degrees; and capable of pleasure in them in different measure. And seeing that wherever power of any kind is given, there is responsibility attached, it is the duty of men to prefer certain impressions of sense to others, *because* they have the power of doing so.* And this is

* (This rather astounding paragraph was anciently parted from the preceding text only by a semi-colon! I have fenced it, at least, with two full stops; for it is, in fact,

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precisely analogous to the law of the moral world, whereby men are supposed not only capable of governing their likes and dislikes, but the whole culpability or propriety of actions is dependent upon this capability; so that men are guilty or otherwise, not for what they do, but for what they desire, the command being not 'Thou shalt obey,' but 'Thou shalt *love*,' the Lord thy God; a vain command, if men were not capable of governing and directing their affections.

3. I assert therefore, that even with respect to impressions of sense, we have a power of preference, and a corresponding duty; and I shall show first the nature of the power, and afterwards the nature of the duty.

Let us take an instance from one of the lowest of the senses, and observe the kind of power we have over the impressions of lingual

the radical theorem not only of this book, but of all my writings on art.)

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taste. On the first offering of two different things to the palate, it is not in our power to prevent or command the instinctive preference. One will be unavoidably and helplessly preferred to the other. But if the same two things be submitted to judgment frequently and attentively, it will be often found that their relations change. The palate, which at first perceived only the coarse and violent qualities of either, will, as it becomes more experienced, acquire greater subtlety of discrimination, perceiving, in both, characters at first unnoticed, which on continued experience will probably become more influential than the first impressions; and whatever this final verdict may be, it is felt by the person who gives it, and received by others, as a more correct one than the first.

4. So, then, the power we have over the preference of impressions of taste is not actual nor immediate, but only a power of testing and

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comparing them frequently and carefully, until that which is the more permanent, or the more consistently agreeable, be determined. But when the instrument of taste is thus in some degree perfected and rendered subtle, by its being practised upon a single object, its conclusions will be more rapid with respect to others; and it will be able to distinguish more quickly in other things, and even sometimes to prefer at once, those qualities which are calculated finally to give it most pleasure; though more capable with respect to those on which it is more frequently exercised; whence people are called 'judges' with respect to this or that particular object of Taste.

5. Now, that verdicts of this kind are received as authoritative by others, proves another and more important fact; namely, that not only changes of opinion take place in consequence of experience, but that those changes are from *variation* of opinion to *unity*

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of opinion;—that, whatever may be the differences of estimate among unpractised or uncultivated tastes, there will be unity of taste among the experienced; and that, therefore, the result of repeated trial and experience is to arrive at principles of preference in some sort common to all, and which are a part of our nature.

I select the sense of taste for an instance, because it is the least favourable to the position I hold, since there is more latitude allowed, and more actual variety of verdict, in the case of this sense than of any other; and yet, however susceptible of variety even the ultimate approximations of its preferences may be, the authority of judges is distinctly allowed; and we hear every day the admission, by those of unpractised palate, that they are, or may be, wrong in their opinions respecting the real pleasurableness of things, either to themselves or to others.

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6. The sense, however, in which they thus use the word "wrong" is merely of that falseness or inaccuracy in conclusion, not of moral delinquency. But there is, as I have stated, a duty, more or less imperative, attached to every power we possess, and therefore to this power the lower senses as well as to all over others.

And this duty is, evidently, to bring every sense into that state of cultivation in which it shall form the truest conclusions respecting all that is submitted to it, and procure us the greatest amount of pleasure consistent with its due relation to other senses and functions. Which three constituents of perfection in sense, (1) true judgment, (2) maximum sensibility, and (3) right relation to others, are invariably coexistent, and involved one by the other; for the true judgment is the result of the high sensibility, and the high

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sensibility of the right relation.* Thus, for instance, with respect to pleasures of taste, it is our duty not to devote such inordinate attention to the discrimination of them as must be inconsistent with our pursuit, and destructive of our capacity, of higher and preferable pleasures; but to cultivate the sense of them in that way which is consistent with all other good; by temperance, namely, and by such attention as the mind, at certain resting moments, may fitly pay even to so ignoble a source of pleasure as this. By which discipline we shall bring the faculty of taste itself to its real maximum of sensibility;† for it cannot be doubted that health, hunger,

* (This paragraph reads rather headlong, again; but it is well considered, and extremely weighty and valuable.)

† (Alas, for all this fine talking, I never took pains enough to learn from my father to be a good judge of wine; an unfilial folly of which I daily repent,—with such a sense of its cruelty and absurdity as—I need not try to express, since it would not be believed.)

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and such general refinement of bodily habits as shall make the body a perfect and fine instrument in all respects, are better promoters of actual enjoyment of taste, than the sickened, sluggish, hard-stimulated fastidiousness of Epicurism.

7. So also it will certainly be found with all the senses, that they individually receive the greatest and purest pleasure when they are in right condition and degree of subordination to all the rest; and that, by the over-cultivation of any one, (for morbid sources of pleasure, and correspondent temptations to irrational indulgence, confessedly are attached to all) we shall add more to their power as instruments of punishment than of pleasure.

If then, as we find in this example of the lowest sense, the power we have over sensation depends mainly on the exercise of attention through certain prolonged periods; —and if, by this exercise, we arrive at ulti-

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mate, constant, and common sources of agreeableness, casting off those which are external, accidental, and individual, that which is required in order to the attainment of accurate conclusions respecting the essence of the Beautiful is nothing more than earnest, loving, and unselfish attention to our impressions of it, by which those which are shallow, false, or peculiar to times and temperaments, may be distinguished from those that are eternal. And this dwelling upon, and fond contemplation of them, (the 'Anschauung' of the Germans)* is perhaps as much as was meant by the Greek Theoria; and it is indeed a very noble exercise of the souls of men, and one by which they are peculiarly distinguished from the anima of lower creatures, which cannot, I think, be proved to have any capacity

* (I have not the least idea, now, what the 'Anschauung' of the Germans is; and whatever it may be, beg my pupils to have nothing to do with it.)

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of contemplation at all, but only a restless vividness of perception and conception, the "fancy" of Hooker (Eccl. Pol. book I. chap. vi. 2).

8. But two very important points are to be observed respecting the direction and discipline of the attention in the early stages of judgment. The first, that, for beneficent purposes, the nature of man has been made reconcileable by custom to *many* things naturally painful to it, and even improper for it; and that therefore, though by continual experience, united with thought, we may discover that which is best of several, yet if we submit ourselves to authority or fashion, and close our eyes, we may be by custom made to tolerate, and even to love and long for, that which is naturally painful and pernicious to us; whence arise incalculable embarrassments on the subject of art.

9. The second, that, in order to the discovery

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of that which is better of two things, it is necessary that both should be equally submitted to the attention, and therefore that we should have so much faith in authority as shall make us repeatedly observe and attend to that which is said to be right, even though at present we may not feel it so. And in the right mingling of this faith with the openness of heart which proves all things, lies the great difficulty of the cultivation of the taste, as far as the spirit of the scholar is concerned; though, even when he has this spirit, he may be long retarded, by having evil examples submitted to him by ignorant masters.*

The temper, therefore, by which right taste is formed, is characteristically patient. It dwells upon what is submitted to it. It does

* (This and the next paragraph are of extreme value and importance. The eleventh paragraph should be also remembered in connection with them.)

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not trample upon it, lest it should be pearls, even though it look like husks. It is a good ground, soft, penetrable, retentive ; it does not send up thorns of unkind thoughts, to choke the weak seed ; it is hungry and thirsty too, and drinks all the dew that falls on it. It is "an honest and good heart," that shows no too ready springing before the sun be up, but fails not afterwards ; it is distrustful of itself, so as to be ready to believe and to try all things, and yet so trustful of itself, that it will neither quit what it has tried, nor take anything without trying. And the pleasure which it has in things that it finds true and good is so great, that it cannot possibly be led aside by any tricks of fashion, or diseases of vanity ; it cannot be cramped in its conclusions by partialities and hypocrisies ; its visions and its delights are too penetrating, too living, for any whitewashed object or shallow fountain long to endure or supply. It clasps all that

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it loves so hard, that it crushes it, if it be hollow.

10. Now, the conclusions of this disposition are sure to be eventually right; more and more right according to the general maturity of all the powers; and sure to come (*quite* *) right at last, because its operation is in analogy to, and in harmony with, the whole spirit of the Christian moral system, and must ultimately love and rest in the great sources of happiness common to all the human race, and based on the relations they hold to their Creator.

These common and general sources of pleasure consist, I believe, in a certain seal, or impress of divine work and character, upon whatever God has wrought in all the world;

* (I have inserted this "quite" because I meant it, and the sentence needs it; but I must beg the reader to observe that I don't, even now, think myself *quite* right in *all* matters, even of taste.)

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only, it being necessary for the perception of them, that their contraries should also be set before us, these divine characteristics, though inseparable from all divine works, are yet suffered to exist in such varieties of degree, that their most limited manifestation shall, in opposition to their most abundant, act as a foil or contrary; just as we conceive of cold as contrary to heat, though the most extreme cold we can produce or conceive is not inconsistent with an unknown amount of heat in the body.

11. Our purity of taste, therefore, is best tested by its universality; for if we can only admire this thing or that, we may be sure that our cause for liking is of a finite and false nature. But if we can perceive beauty in everything of God's doing, we may argue that we have reached the true perception of its universal laws. Hence, false taste may be known by its fastidiousness, by its demands

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of pomp, splendour, and unusual combination, by its enjoyment only of particular styles and modes of things, and by its pride also: for it is for ever meddling, mending, accumulating, and self-exulting; its eye is always upon itself, and it tests all things round it by the way they fit it. But true taste is for ever growing, learning, reading, worshipping, laying its hand upon its mouth because it is astonished, lamenting over itself, and testing itself by the way that it fits things. And it finds whereof to feed, and whereby to grow, in all things. The complaint so often heard from young artists, that they have not within their reach materials or subjects enough for their fancy, is utterly groundless, and the sign only of their own blindness and inefficiency; for there is that to be seen in every street and lane of every city,—that to be felt, and found in every human heart and countenance,—that to be loved in every roadside weed and moss-

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grown wall, which, in the hands of faithful men, may convey emotions of glory and sublimity. continual and exalted.

12. Let therefore the young artist beware of the spirit of Choice; * it is an insolent spirit at the best, and commonly a base and blind one too, checking all progress and blasting all power, encouraging weaknesses, pampering partialities, and teaching us to look to accidents of nature for the help and the joy which should come from our own hearts. He draws nothing well who thirsts not to draw *every*thing; when a good painter shrinks, it is because he is humbled, not fastidious; when he stops, it is because he is surfeited, and not because he thinks Nature has given him unkindly food, or that he fears famine.†

* "Nothing comes amiss,
A good digestion turneth all to health."—G. HERBERT.

† Yet note the difference between the choice that comes of Pride, and the choice that comes of Love, and compare Chap. XV. § 6.

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13. Hence, it becomes a more imperative duty to accustom ourselves to the enjoyment of those pleasures of sight which are most elevated in character, because these are not only the most acute, but the most easily, constantly, and unselfishly attainable.* For had it been ordained by the Almighty that the highest pleasures of sight should be those of most difficult attainment, and that to arrive at them it should be necessary to accumulate gilded palaces, tower over tower, and pile artificial mountains around insinuated lakes, there would have been a direct contradiction between the unselfish duties and inherent desires of every individual. But no such contradiction exists in the system of Divine Providence; which, leaving it open to us, if

* (This is all true, in the sense attached to it; but requires reconciliation with what I have said elsewhere of the rarity of extremely beautiful things. I will not trouble the reader at present with more than the immediate statement in the text.)

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we will, as creatures in probation, to abuse this sense like every other, and pamper it with selfish and thoughtless vanities as we pamper the palate with deadly meats, until the appetite of tasteful cruelty is lost in its sickened satiety, incapable of pleasure, unless, Caligula like, it concentrate the labour of a million of lives into the sensation of an hour, leaves it also open to us, by humble and loving ways, to make ourselves susceptible of deep delight from the meanest objects of creation;—a delight which shall not separate us from our fellows, nor require the sacrifice of any duty or occupation, but which shall bind us closer to men and to God, and be with us always, harmonized with every action, consistent with every claim, unchanging and eternal.

14. Seeing then that these qualities of material objects which are calculated to give us this universal pleasure, are demonstrably

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constant in their address to human nature, they must belong in some measure to whatever has been esteemed beautiful throughout successive ages of the world, and they are also by their definition common to all the works of God. Therefore it is evident that it must be possible to reason them out, as well as to feel them out; possible to divest every object of that which makes it accidentally or temporarily pleasant, and to strip it bare of distinctive qualities, until we arrive at those which it has in common with all other beautiful things, which we may then safely affirm to be the cause of its ultimate and true delightfulness.

15. Now this process of reasoning will be that which I shall endeavour to employ in the succeeding investigations, a process perfectly safe, so long as we are quite sure that we are reasoning concerning objects which produce in us one and the same sensation; but not safe if

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the sensation produced be of a different nature,* though it may be equally agreeable; for what produces a different sensation must be a different cause. And the difficulty of reasoning respecting Beauty arises chiefly from the ambiguity of the word, which stands in different people's minds for totally different sensations, for which there can be no common cause.

When, for instance, Mr. Alison endeavours to support his position, that "no man is sensible to beauty in those objects with regard to which he has not previous ideas," by the remark that "the beauty of a theory, or of a relic of antiquity, is unintelligible to a peasant,"

* (The word "nature" is not sufficiently explained in this passage; and it ought to have reiterated in full,—what produces "a sensation of a different nature" must be a different cause—for instance, the prick of a thorn on the tongue, as distinguished from the pungency of a flavour. Mr. Alison would have called both beautiful, or both ugly, indiscriminately.)

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we see at once that it is hopeless to argue with a man who, under his general term Beauty, may, for anything we know, be sometimes speaking of mathematical demonstrability, and sometimes of historical interest. While, even if we could succeed in limiting the term to the sense of external attractiveness, there would be still room for many phases of error; for though the beauty of a snowy mountain and of a human cheek or forehead, so far as both are considered as mere matter, is the same, and traceable to certain qualities of colour and line, common to both, and by reason extricable; yet the flush of the cheek and moulding of the brow, as they express modesty, affection, or intellect, possess sources of agreeableness * which are not

* (The general tendency of modern art, under the guidance of Paris, renders it necessary to explain now to the reader, what I before left him to feel, that the sexual instinct is entirely excluded from consideration

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common to the snowy mountain, and the interference of whose influence we must be cautious to prevent, in our examination of those which are material or universal.*

16. The first thing, then, that we have to do, is accurately to discriminate and define those appearances from which we are about to reason as belonging to Beauty, properly so called; and to clear the ground of all the confused ideas and erroneous theories with which the misapprehension, or metaphorical use, of the term has encumbered it.

By the term Beauty, then, properly are signified two things. First, that external quality of bodies already so often spoken of, and which, whether it occur in a stone, flower, beast, or

throughout the argument of this essay; I take no notice of the feelings of the beautiful, which we share with flies and spiders. Conf. the 2nd paragraph of next chapter.)

* Compare Spenser (Hymn to Beauty):

"But ah, believe me, there is more than so,
That works such wonders in the minds of men."

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man, is absolutely identical: which, as I have already asserted, may be shown to be in some sort typical of the Divine attributes, and which, therefore, I shall, for distinction's sake, call Typical Beauty: and, secondarily, the appearance of felicitous fulfilment of function in living things, more especially of the joyful and right exertion of perfect life in man; and this kind of beauty I shall call Vital Beauty.

Any application of the word 'Beautiful' to other appearances or qualities than these, is either false or metaphorical; as, for instance, to the splendour of a discovery, the fitness* of a proportion, the coherence of a chain of reasoning, or the power of bestowing pleasure which objects receive from association; a power confessedly great, and interfering, as we shall presently find, in a most embarrassing way with the attractiveness of inherent beauty.

* (*Constructive* fitness, I should have said, or mechanical; as between the length of arms in a lever.)

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But in order that the mind of the reader may not be biassed at the outset by that which he may happen to have received of current theories respecting beauty, founded on the above metaphorical uses of the word (theories which are less to be reprobated as accounting falsely * for the sensations of which they treat, than as confusing two or more pleasurable sensations together), I shall briefly glance at the four erroneous positions most frequently held upon this subject, before proceeding to examine those typical and vital properties of things, to which I conceive that all our original conceptions of beauty may be traced.

* (I meant, that they are not so false, or sometimes are not fa'se at all, in accounting, etc.)

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CHAPTER IV.

Of False Opinions held Concerning Beauty.

(The whole of this chapter is extremely well reasoned and clearly put; nor can I in any necessary point better it. The importance of its contents to future analysis may justify my requesting the reader's fixed attention to its distinctions and definitions.)

1. I PURPOSE at present to speak only of four of the more current opinions respecting Beauty, for of the errors connected with the pleasurableness of (constructive) proportion, and with the expression of right feelings in the countenance, I shall have opportunity to treat in the succeeding chapters.

Those erring or inconsistent positions which I would at once dismiss are: the first, that the Beautiful is the True; the second, that

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the Beautiful is the Useful; the third, that it is dependent on Custom; and the fourth, that it is dependent on the Association of Ideas.

(A) To assert that the Beautiful is the True, appears, at first, like asserting that propositions are matter, and matter propositions. But giving the best and most rational interpretation we can, and supposing the holders of this strange position to mean only that things are beautiful which appear what they indeed are, and ugly which appear what they are not, we find them instantly contradicted by each and every conclusion of experience. A stone looks as truly a stone as a rose looks a rose, and yet is not so beautiful: a cloud may look more like a castle than a cloud, and be the more beautiful on that account. The mirage of the desert is fairer than its sands; the false image of the under heaven fairer than the sea.* I

* (I should have written, "image of heaven under the sea, fairer than the sea itself.")

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am at a loss to know how any so untenable a position could ever have been advanced; but it may, perhaps, have arisen from some confusion of the beauty of art with the beauty of nature, and from an illogical expansion of the very certain truth, that nothing is beautiful in art, which, professing to be an imitation, or a statement, is not, as such, in some sort true.*

2. (B) That the Beautiful is the Useful, is an assertion evidently based on that limited and false sense of the latter term which I have already deprecated. As it is the most degrading and dangerous supposition which can be advanced on the subject, so, fortunately, it is the most palpably absurd. It is to confound admiration with hunger, love with lust, and life with sensation; it is to assert that the

* (Observe the careful limitation,—*in some sort* true. Altogether true, it never can be,—far short of true, it often *ought* to be.)

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human creature has no ideas, and no feelings, except those ultimately referable to its brutal appetites. It has not a single fact nor appearance of fact to support it, and needs no combating; at least until its advocates have obtained the consent of the majority of mankind, that the most beautiful productions of nature are seeds and roots; and of art, spades and millstones.

3. (c) Somewhat more rational grounds appear for the assertion that the sense of the Beautiful arises from familiarity with the object, though even this could not long be maintained by a thinking person. For all that can be alleged in defence of such a supposition is, that familiarity deprives some objects, which at first appeared ugly, of much of their repulsiveness;* whence it is as

* (The sternest sense of Johnson, and brightest wit of Goldsmith, have been used to exhibit the follies of fashion, and show the power of national habit; but they never

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rational to conclude that familiarity is the cause of beauty, as it would be to argue that because it is possible to acquire a taste for olives, therefore custom is the cause of lusciousness in grapes. Nevertheless, there are some phenomena resulting from the tendency of our nature to be influenced by habit, of which it may be well to observe the limits.

4. Custom has a two-fold operation; the one, to deaden the frequency and force of repeated impressions, the other, to endear the familiar object to the affections. Commonly, where the mind is vigorous, and the power of sensation very perfect, it has rather the last operation than the first; with meaner minds, the first takes place in the higher degree, so that they are commonly characterized by a desire of

seriously deny the reality of beauty, however the Chinese Citizen of the World may be shocked by the white teeth and long feet of English ladies.)

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excitement, and the want of the loving, fixed, theoretic power. But both take place in some degree with all men; so that as life advances impressions of all kinds become less rapturous, owing to their repetition. It is however beneficently ordained that repulsiveness shall be diminished by custom in a far greater degree than the sensation of beauty; so that the anatomist in a little time loses all sense of horror in the torn flesh and carious bone, while the sculptor ceases not to feel, to the close of his life, the deliciousness of every line of the outward frame. So then, as in that with which we are made familiar, the repulsiveness is constantly diminishing; and such claims as it may be able to put forth on the affections are daily becoming stronger, while, in what is submitted to us of new or strange, that which may be repulsive is felt in its full force while no hold is as yet laid on the affections, there is a very strong preference induced in most minds

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for that to which they are accustomed over that they know not, and this is strongest in those which are least open to sensations of positive beauty.

5. But however far this operation may be carried, its utmost effect is but the deadening and approximating of the sensations of beauty and ugliness. It never mixes, nor crosses, nor in any way alters them; it has not the slightest connection with, or power over, their nature. By tasting two wines alternately, we may deaden our perception of their flavour; nay, we may even do more than can ever be done in the case of sight,—we may confound the two flavours together: but it will hardly be argued, therefore, that custom is the cause of either flavour. And so, though by habit we may deaden the effect of ugliness or beauty, it is not for that reason to be affirmed that habit is the cause of either sensation. We may keep a skull beside

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us as long as we please, we may overcome its repulsiveness, we may render ourselves capable of perceiving many qualities of beauty about its lines, we may contemplate it for years together if we will,—it, and nothing else,—but we shall not get ourselves to think as well of it as of a child's fair face.

6. It would be easy to pursue the subject farther, but I believe that every thoughtful reader will be perfectly well able to supply farther illustrations, and sweep away the sandy foundations of the opposite theory, unassisted. Let it, however, be observed, that, in spite of all custom, an Englishman instantly acknowledges, and at first sight, the superiority of the turban to the hat, or of the plaid to the coat; that, whatever the dictates of immediate fashion may compel, the superior gracefulness of the Greek or middle-age costumes is invariably felt; and that, respecting what has been asserted of negro nations looking with disgust

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on the white face, no importance whatever is to be attached to the opinions of races who have never received any ideas of beauty whatsoever (these ideas being only received by minds under some certain degree of cultivation), and whose disgust arises naturally from what they may suppose to be a sign of weakness or ill health. It would be futile to proceed into farther detail.

I pass to the last and most weighty theory, that the agreeableness in objects which we call Beauty, is the result of the Association with them of agreeable or interesting ideas.

7. (D) Frequent has been the support, and wide the acceptance, of this supposition; and yet I suppose that no two consecutive sentences were ever written in defence of it, without involving either a contradiction, or a confusion of terms. Thus Alison: "There are scenes undoubtedly more beautiful than Runnymede, yet, to those who recollect the

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great event that passed there, there is no scene perhaps which so strongly seizes on the imagination." Where we are wonder-struck at the audacious obtuseness which would prove the power of imagination by its *overcoming that very other power* (of inherent beauty) whose existence the arguer denies. For the only logical conclusion which can possibly be drawn from the above sentence is, that imagination is *not* the source of beauty, for although no scene seizes so strongly on the imagination, yet there are scenes "more beautiful than Runnymede." And though instances of self-contradiction as laconic and complete as this are to be found in few writers except Alison,* yet if the arguments on the subject be fairly sifted from

* (The reader must not confuse the metaphysician with the historian. I know no work of as wide range in which the argument is more logically sustained, or more justly in many points conclusive, than that of Sir A. Alison's "History of Europe.")

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the mass of confused language with which they are always encumbered, and placed in logical form, they will be found invariably to involve one of these two syllogisms: either, Association gives pleasure, and Beauty gives pleasure, therefore Association is Beauty; or, the power of Association is stronger than the power of Beauty, therefore the power of Association *is* the power of Beauty.

8. Nevertheless * it is necessary for us to observe the real value and authority of association in the moral system, and how ideas of actual beauty may be affected by it, otherwise we shall be liable to embarrassment throughout the whole of the succeeding argument.

Association is of two kinds, Rational and Accidental. By Rational Association I understand the interest which any object may bear

* (The four false theories are now dismissed; nor farther regarded, throughout the whole essay.)

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historically, as having been in some way connected with the affairs or affections of men; an interest shared in the minds of all who are aware of such connection: which to call beauty is mere and gross confusion of terms; it is no theory to be confuted, but a misuse of language to be set aside, a misuse involving the positions that in uninhabited countries the vegetation has no grace, the rock no dignity, the cloud no colour, and that the snowy summits of the Alps receive no loveliness from the sunset light, because they have not been polluted by the wrath, ravage, and misery of men.*

9. By Accidental Association, I understand

* (It is curious to note in this passage the single emotion of youth, so often described by Wordsworth. The more advanced perception indicated in the opening paragraph of the "Lamp of Memory," in the "Seven Lamps," should be compared. 'As I have grown older, the aspects of nature conducive to human life have become hourly more dear to me; and I had rather now see a brown harvest field than the brightest Aurora Borealis.)

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the accidental connection of ideas and memories with material things, owing to which those material things are regarded as agreeable or otherwise, according to the nature of the feelings or recollections they summon; the association being commonly involuntary, and oftentimes so vague as that no distinct image is suggested by the object, but we feel a painfulness in it or pleasure from it, without knowing wherefore. Of this operation of the mind (which is that of which I spoke as causing inextricable embarrassments on the subject of beauty) the experience is constant, so that its more energetic manifestations require no illustration. But I do not think that the minor degrees and shades of this great influence have been sufficiently appreciated. Not only all vivid emotions, and all circumstances of exciting interest, leave their light and shadow on the senseless things and instruments among which, or

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through whose agency, they have been felt or learned; but I believe that the eye cannot rest on a material form, in a moment of depression or exultation, without communicating to that form a spirit and a life:—a life which will make it afterwards in some degree loved or feared,—a charm or a painfulness for which we shall be unable to account even to ourselves, which will not indeed be perceptible, except by its delicate influence on our judgment in cases of complicated beauty. Let the eye but rest on a rough piece of branch of curious form during a conversation with a friend; rest, however unconsciously,—and though the conversation be forgotten, though every circumstance connected with it be as utterly lost to the memory as though it had not been, yet the eye will, through the whole life after, take a certain pleasure in such boughs which it had not before, a pleasure so slight, a trace of feeling so delicate, as to leave

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us utterly unconscious of its peculiar power; but undestroyable by any reasoning, a part, thenceforward, of our constitution, destroyable only by the same arbitrary process of association by which it was created. Reason has no effect upon it whatsoever. And there is probably no one opinion which is formed by any of us, in matters of taste, which is not in some degree influenced by unconscious association of this kind. In many, who have no definite rules of judgment, preference is decided by little else: and thus, unfortunately,* its operations are mistaken for, or rather substituted for, those of inherent beauty, and its real position and value in the moral system are in a great measure overlooked.

10. For I believe that mere pleasure and

* ("Unfortunately" is a wrong word, here. Nothing is unfortunate in the system of our nature; we become unfortunate in refusing to understand it and obey. See the more careful sequel, p. 90, "And it is well for us," etc.)

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pain have less associative power than duty performed or omitted; and that the great use of the Associative faculty is, not to add beauty to material things, but to add force to the Conscience. But for this external and all-powerful witness, the voice of the inward guide might be lost in each particular instance, almost as soon as disobeyed; the echo of it in after time, whereby, though perhaps feeble as warning, it becomes powerful as punishment, might be silenced; and the strength of the protection pass away in the lightness of the lash. Therefore it has received the power of enlisting external and unmeaning things in its aid, and transmitting to all that is indifferent, its own authority to reprove or reward; so that, as we travel the way of life, we have the choice, according to our working, of turning all the voices of Nature into one song of rejoicing, and all her lifeless creatures into a glad company,

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whereof the meanest shall be beautiful in our eyes by its kind message: or, of withering and quenching her sympathy into a fearful withdrawn silence of condemnation, or into a crying out of her stones, and a shaking of her dust against us. Nor is it any marvel that the theoretic faculty should be overpowered by this momentous operation, and the indifferent appeals and inherent glories of external things, in the end, overlooked, when the perfection of God's works is felt only as the sweetness of His promises, and their admirableness only as the threatenings of His power.

11. But it is evident that the full exercise of this noble function of the Associative faculty is inconsistent with absolute and incontrovertible conclusions on subjects of theoretic preference. For it is quite impossible for any individual to distinguish in himself the unconscious underworking of indefinite association peculiar to him in-

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dividually, from those great laws of choice under which he is comprehended with all his race. And it is well for us that it is so; the harmony of God's good work is not in us interrupted by this mingling of universal and peculiar principles: for by these, such difference is secured in the feelings as shall make fellowship itself more delightful, by its inter-communicate character; and such variety of feeling also in each of us, separately, as shall make us capable of enjoying scenes of different kinds and orders, instead of morbidly seeking for some perfect epitome of the Beautiful in one. And also that deadening by custom of theoretic impressions to which I have above alluded, is counter-balanced by the pleasantness of acquired association; and the loss of the intense feeling of the youth, which "had no need of a remoter charm, by thought supplied, or any interest, unborrowed from the eye,"

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is replaced by the gladness of conscience, and the vigour of the reflecting and imaginative faculties, as they take their wide and aged grasp of the great relations between the earth and its dead people.*

12. In proportion therefore to the value, constancy, and efficiency of this influence, we must be modest and cautious in the pronouncing of positive opinions on the subject of beauty. For every one of us has peculiar sources of enjoyment necessarily opened to him in certain scenes and things, sources which are sealed to others; and we must be wary, on the one hand, of confounding these in ourselves with ultimate conclusions of taste, and so forcing them upon all as authoritative; and on the other, of supposing that the enjoyments of others which we cannot share are shallow or unwarrantable,

* (And, much more, its living people, and those hereafter to live.)

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because incommunicable. I fear, for instance, that in the former portion of this work I may have attributed too much community and authority to certain affections of my own for scenery inducing emotions of wild, impetuous, and enthusiastic characters, and too little to those which I perceive in others for things peaceful, humble, meditative, and solemn. So also between youth and age there will be found differences of seeking, which are not wrong, nor of false choice in either, but of different temperament; the youth sympathizing more with the gladness, fulness, and magnificence of things, and the grey hairs with their completion, sufficiency, and repose. And so, neither condemning the delights of others, nor altogether distrustful of our own, we must advance, as we live on, from what is brilliant to what is pure, and from what is promised to what is fulfilled, and from what is our strength to what is our crown: only

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observing in all things how that which is indeed wrong, and to be cut up from the root, is *dislike,** and not affection. For by the very nature of these Beautiful qualities, which I have defined to be the signature of God upon His works, it is evident that in whatever we altogether dislike, we see not all; that the keenness of our vision is to be tested by the expansiveness of our love, and that as far as the influence of association has voice in the question, though it is indeed possible that the inevitable painfulness of an object, for which we can render no sufficient reason, may be owing to its recalling of a sorrow, it is more probably dependent on its accusation of a crime.

* (An admirable conclusion,—yet needing this much of drawback, that things justly disliked, and ascertained to be so, ought to be disliked more and more until we put an end to them; and that we have always to beware of getting used to evil, no less than of forgetting good.)

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SECTION II.

OF TYPICAL BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.

Of Infinity, or the Type of Divine Incomprehensibility.

(The preceding chapter, though one of great importance, is throughout a parenthesis, and the proper subject of enquiry is now taken up, a little too hurriedly. The word 'typical' might also have been better chosen; especially since it has lately been used so often to signify representative examples of things. It means here any character in material things by which they convey an idea of immaterial ones.)

1. THE subject being now in some measure cleared of embarrassment, let us briefly distinguish those qualities or types on whose combination is dependent the power of mere material loveliness. I pretend neither to enumerate, nor to perceive, them all: for it may be generally observed that whatever good there may be desirable by man, more especially

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good belonging to his moral nature, there will be a corresponding agreeableness in whatever external object reminds him of such good, whether it remind him by arbitrary association, or by typical resemblance; and that the infinite ways, whether by reason or experience discoverable, by which matter in some sort may remind* us of moral perfections, are hardly within any reasonable limits to be explained, if even by any single mind they might all be traced. Yet certain palpable and powerful modes there are, by observing which we may come at such general conclusions on the subject as may be practically useful, and more than these I shall not attempt to obtain.

2. And first, I would ask of the reader to enter upon the subject with me, as far as may be, as a little child, ridding himself of all

* ("Put us in mind" would have been a better phrase, as a rock, of stability—or its shadow, of kindness, etc.)

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conventional and authoritative thoughts, and especially of such associations as arise from his respect for Pagan art, or which are in any way traceable to classical readings. I recollect that Mr. Alison traces his first perceptions of beauty in external nature to this most corrupt source, thus betraying so total and singular a want of natural sensibility as may well excuse the deficiencies of his following arguments. For there was never yet the child of any promise (so far as the Theoretic faculties are concerned) but awaked to the sense of beauty with the first gleam of reason; and I suppose there are few among those who love Nature otherwise than by profession and at second-hand, who look not back to their youngest and least-learned days as those of the most intense, superstitious, insatiable, and beatific perception of her splendours. And the bitter decline of this glorious feeling, though many note it not, partly owing to the cares

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and weight of manhood, which leave them not the time nor the liberty to look for their lost treasure, and partly to the human and divine affections which are appointed to take its place, yet has formed the subject, not indeed of lamentation, but of holy thankfulness for the witness it bears to the immortal origin and end* of our nature, to one whose authority is almost without appeal in all questions relating to the influence of external things upon the pure human soul.

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy.
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy:
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy.
The youth, who daily farther from the east

* (To the origin and *purpose* of it, yes; but not to the immortality of it,—else the lamb might be proved as immortal as its slaughterer. Wordsworth is indeed 'almost without appeal' as to the impressions of natural things on the human mind; but by no means as to the logical conclusions to be surely drawn from them.)

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Must travel, still is nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended.
At length the man perceives it die away
And fade into the light of common day."

And if it were possible for us to recollect all the unaccountable and happy instincts of the careless time, and to reason upon them with the maturer judgment, we might arrive at more rapid and right results than either the philosophy, or the sophisticated practice, of art has yet attained. But we lose the perceptions before we are capable of methodizing or comparing them.

3. One, however, of these child instincts, I believe that few forget, the emotion, namely, caused by all open ground, or lines of any spacious kind against the sky, behind which there might be conceived the Sea. It is an emotion more pure than that caused by the sea itself, for I recollect distinctly running down behind the banks of a high beach to get their

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land line cutting against the sky, and receiving a more strange delight from this than from the sight of the ocean. I am not sure that this feeling is common to all children, (or would be common, if they were all in circumstances admitting it), but I have ascertained it to be frequent among those who possess the most vivid sensibilities for nature; and I am certain that the modification of it which belongs to our after years is common to all, the love, namely, of a light distance appearing over a comparatively dark horizon. This I have tested too frequently to be mistaken, by offering to indifferent spectators forms of equal abstract beauty in half tint, relieved, the one against dark sky, the other against a bright distance. The preference is invariably given to the latter; and it is very certain that this preference arises not from any supposition of there being greater truth in this than the other, for the same preference is unhesitatingly

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accorded to the same effect in Nature herself. Whatever beauty there may result from effects of light on foreground objects,—from the dew of the grass, the flash of the cascade, the glitter of the birch trunk, or the fair daylight hues of darker things, (and joyfulness there is in all of them), there is yet a light which the eye invariably seeks with a deeper feeling of the beautiful,—the light of the declining or breaking day, and the flakes of scarlet cloud burning like watch-fires in the green sky of the horizon; a deeper feeling, I say, not perhaps more acute, but having more of spiritual hope and longing, less of animal and present life: more manifest, invariably, in those of more serious and determined mind, (I use the word serious, not as being opposed to cheerful, but to trivial and volatile,) but, I think, marked and unfailing even in those of the least thoughtful dispositions. I am willing to let it rest on the determination of every reader, whether

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the pleasure which he has received from these effects of calm and luminous distance be not the most singular and memorable of which he has been conscious; whether all that is dazzling in colour, perfect in form, gladdening in expression, be not of evanescent and shallow appealing, when compared with the still small voice of the level twilight behind purple hills, or the scarlet arch of dawn over the dark, troublous-edged sea.

4. Let us try to discover that which effects of this kind possess, or suggest, peculiar to themselves; and which other effects of light and colour possess not. There *must* be something in them of a peculiar character, and that, whatever it be, must be one of the primal and most earnest motives of beauty to human sensation.

Do they show finer characters of form than can be developed by the broader daylight? Not so; for their power is almost independent

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of the forms they assume or display: it matters little whether the bright clouds be simple or manifold, whether the mountain line be subdued or majestic; the fairer forms of earthly things are by them subdued and disguised, the round and muscular growth of the forest trunks is sunk into skeleton lines of quiet shade, the purple clefts of the hill-side are labyrinthed in the darkness, the orbed spring and whirling wave of the torrent have given place to a white, ghastly, interrupted gleaming. Have they more perfection or fulness of colour? Not so; for their effect is oftentimes deeper when their hues are dim, than when they are blazoned with crimson and pale gold: and assuredly, in the blue of the rainy sky, in the many tints of morning flowers, in the sunlight on summer foliage and field, there are more sources of mere sensual colour-pleasure than in the single streak of wan and dying light.

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5. It is not then by nobler form, it is not by positiveness of hue, it is not by intensity of light, (for the sun itself at noonday is effectless upon the feelings,) that this strange distant space possesses its attractive power. But there is one thing that it has, or suggests, which no other object of sight suggests in equal degree, and that is—Infinity. It is of all visible things the least material, the least finite, the farthest withdrawn from the earth prison-house, the most typical of the nature of God, the most suggestive of the glory of His dwelling-place. For the sky of night, though we may know it boundless, is dark; it is a studded vault, a roof that seems to shut us in and down; but the bright distance has no limit, we feel its infinity, as we rejoice in its purity of light.

6. Now not only is this expression of infinity in distance most precious wherever we find it, however solitary it may be, and however un-

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assisted by other forms and kinds of beauty, but it is of that value that no such other forms will altogether recompense us for its loss: and, much as I dread the enunciation of anything that may seem like a conventional rule, I have no hesitation in asserting that no work of any art, in which this expression of infinity is possible, can be perfect, or supremely elevated, without it, and that, in proportion to its presence, it will exalt and render impressive even the most tame and trivial themes. And I think if there be any one grand division, by which it is at all possible to set the productions of painting, so far as their mere plan or system is concerned, on our right and left hands, it is this of light and dark background, of *heaven light*, or of *object light*.* For I

* (This quite true conclusion reaches farther than I then knew, or at least felt clearly enough to express. Not only light *in* the sky, but light *from* it, is essential to the greatest work: the diffused light of heaven on all sides, as distinguished from chiaro-oscuro in a room.)

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know not any truly great painter of any time, who manifests not the most intense pleasure in the luminous space of his backgrounds, or who ever sacrifices this pleasure where the nature of his subject admits of its attainment; as, on the other hand, I know not that the habitual use of dark backgrounds can be shown as having ever been coexistent with pure or high feeling, and, except in the case of Rembrandt, (and then under peculiar circumstances only), with any high power of intellect. It is, however, necessary carefully to observe the following modifications of this broad principle.

7. The absolute necessity, for such I indeed consider it, is of no more than such a mere luminous distant point as may give to the feelings a species of escape from all the finite objects about them. There is a spectral etching of Rembrandt, a Presentation of Christ in the Temple, where the figure of a

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robed priest stands glaring by its gems out of the gloom, holding a crosier. Behind it there is a subdued window-light, seen in the opening between two columns, without which the impressiveness of the whole subject would, I think, be incalculably brought down. I cannot tell whether I am at present allowing too much weight to my own fancies and predilections,* but without so much escape into the outer air and open heaven as this, I can take permanent pleasure in no picture.

8. And I think I am supported in this feeling by the unanimous practice, if not the confessed opinion, of all artists. The painter of portrait is unhappy without his conventional white stroke under the sleeve, or beside the arm-chair; the painter of interiors feels like

* (No: but far too much weight to little matters. A vulgar picture cannot be made a religious one by a hole in a wall.)

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a caged bird, unless he can throw a window open, or set the door ajar; the landscapist dares not lose himself in forest without a gleam of light under its farthest branches, nor venture out in rain unless he may somewhere pierce to a better promise in the distance, or cling to some closing gap of variable blue above. Escape, Hope, Infinity, by whatever conventionalism sought, the desire is the same in all, the instinct constant: it is no mere point of light that is wanted;—in the etching of Rembrandt above instanced, a gleam of armour or fold of temple curtain would have been utterly valueless;—neither is it liberty, for though we cut down hedges and level hills, and give what waste and plain we choose, on the right hand and the left, it is all comfortless and undesired, so long as we cleave not a way of escape forward: and however narrow and thorny and difficult the nearer path, it matters not, so only that

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the clouds open for us at its close.* Neither will any amount of beauty in nearer form make us content to stay with it, so long as we are shut down to that alone ;† nor is any form so cold or so hurtful but that we may look upon it with kindness, so only that it rise against the infinite hope of light beyond. The reader can follow out the analogies of this unassisted.

9. But although this narrow portal of escape be all that is absolutely necessary, I think that the dignity of the painting increases with the extent and amount of the expression. With the earlier and mightier painters of Italy, the practice is commonly to leave their distance of pure and open sky, of such simplicity that

* (All this is—in the main—true ; but much too emphatically put. Disagreeable things may be less disagreeable when one sees a way out of them,—but one prefers things pleasant in the meantime, whether there's a way out, or not.)

† (Well ;—I don't feel justified in saying that,—till I've had the chance.)

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it in nowise shall interfere with, or draw the attention from, the interest of the figures; and of such purity that, especially towards the horizon, it shall be in the highest degree expressive of the infinite space of heaven. I do not mean to say that they did this with any occult or metaphysical motives. They did it, I think, with the unpretending simplicity of all earnest men; they did what they loved and felt; they sought what the heart naturally seeks, and gave what it most gratefully receives; and I look to them as in all points of principle, (not, observe, of knowledge or empirical attainment) as the most irrefragable authorities, precisely on account of the child-like innocence, which never deemed itself authoritative, but acted upon desire, and not upon dicta, and sought for sympathy, not for admiration.

10. And so we find the same simple and sweet treatment, the open sky, the tender,

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unpretending horizontal white clouds, the far winding and abundant landscape, in Giotto, Taddeo Gaddi, Laurati, Angelico, Benozzo, Ghirlandajo, Francia, Perugino, and the young Raffaelle; the first symptom of conventionality appearing in Perugino, who, though with intense feeling of light and colour he carried the glory of his luminous distance far beyond all his predecessors, began at the same time to use a somewhat morbid relief of his figures against the upper sky. This he has done in the Assumption of the Florentine Academy, in that of l'Annunziata, and of the Gallery of Bologna; in all which pictures the lower portions are incomparably the finest, owing to the light distance behind the heads.* Raffaelle, in his fall, betrayed the faith he had received from his father and his master, and substituted

* (This is quite true; but not for metaphysical reasons only. Against a light background, the dark points and half tones of a head have double power; and are just so far additional elements in its expression.)

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for the radiant sky of the Madonna del Cardellino, the chamber-wall of the Madonna della Seggiola, and the brown wainscot of the Baldacchino. Yet it is curious to observe how much of the dignity even of his later pictures depends on such portions as the green light of the lake, and sky behind the rocks, in the St. John of the tribune; and how the repainted distortion of the Madonna dell' Impannata is redeemed into something like elevated character, merely by the light of the linen window from which it takes its name.

11. That which was done by the Florentines in pure simplicity of heart, the Venetians did through love of the colour and splendour of the sky itself, even to the frequent sacrificing of their subject to the passion of its distance. In Carpaccio, John Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, and Tintoret, the preciousness of the luminous sky, so far as it might be at all consistent with their subject, is nearly constant;

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abandoned altogether in portraiture only, seldom even there, and never with advantage. Titian and Veronese, who had less exalted feeling than the others, afford a few instances of exception: the latter overpowering his silvery distances with foreground splendour; the former sometimes sacrificing them to a luscious fulness of colour, as in the Flagellation in the Louvre, by a comparison of which with the unequalled majesty of the Entombment opposite, the applicability of the general principle may at once be tested.

12. But of the value of this mode of treatment there is a farther and more convincing proof than its adoption either by the innocence of the Florentine or the ardour of the Venetian; namely, that when retained or imitated from them by the landscape painters of the seventeenth century, when appearing in isolation from all other good, among the weaknesses and paltrinesses of Claude, the mannerisms of

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Gaspar, and the caricatures and brutalities of Salvator, it yet redeems and upholds all three, conquers all foulness by its purity, vindicates all folly by its dignity,* and puts an uncomprehended power of permanent address to the human heart upon the lips of the senseless and the profane.†

* (Too fast and far again! by much; the impetus of phrase running away with me. See the mischief of fine writing.)

† In one of the smaller rooms of the Pitti Palace, over the door, is a Temptation of St. Anthony, by Salvator, wherein such power as the artist possessed is fully manifested, and less offensively than is usual in his sacred subjects. It is a vigorous and ghastly thought, in that kind of horror which is dependent on scenic effect perhaps unrivalled, and I shall have occasion to refer to it again in speaking of the powers of Imagination. I allude to it here, because the sky of the distance affords a remarkable instance of the power of light at present under discussion. It is formed of flakes of black cloud, with rents and openings of intense and lurid green, and at least half of the impressiveness of the picture depends on these openings. Close them, make the sky one mass of gloom, and the spectre will be

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13. Now although I doubt not that the general value of this treatment will be acknowledged by all lovers of art, it is not certain that the point to prove which I have brought it forward will be as readily conceded; namely, the inherent power of all representations of infinity over the human heart. For there are, indeed, countless associations of pure and religious kind, which combine with each other to enhance the impression when presented in this particular form, whose power I neither deny nor am careful to distinguish, seeing that they all tend to the same point,

awful no longer. It owes to the light of the distance both its size and its spirituality. The time would fail me, if I were to name the tenth part of the pictures which occur to me, whose vulgarity is redeemed by this circumstance alone: and yet let not the artist trust to such morbid and conventional use of it as may be seen in the common blue and yellow effectism of the present day. Of the value of moderation and simplicity in the use of this, as of all other sources of pleasurable emotion, I shall presently have occasion to speak farther.

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and have reference to heavenly hopes; delights they are in seeing the narrow, black, miserable earth fairly compared with the bright firmament; reachings forward unto the things that are before, and joyfulness in the apparent, though unreachable, nearness and promise of them. But there are other modes in which infinity may be represented, which are confused by no associations of the kind, and which would, as being in mere matter, appear trivial and mean, but for their incalculable influence on the forms of all that we feel to be beautiful.

14. The first of these is the curvature of lines and surfaces, wherein it at first appears futile to insist upon any resemblance or suggestion of infinity, since there is certainly, in our ordinary contemplation of it, no sensation of the kind. But I have repeated again and again that the ideas of beauty are instinctive, and that it is only upon

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consideration, and even then in doubtful and disputable way, that they appear in their typical character. Neither do I intend at all to insist upon the particular meaning which they appear to myself to bear, but merely on their actual and demonstrable agreeableness: so that in the present case, while I assert positively, and have no fear of being able to prove, that a curve of any kind is more beautiful than a right line, I leave it to the reader to accept or not, as he pleases, that reason of its agreeableness which is the only one that I can at all trace; namely, that every curve divides itself infinitely by its changes of direction.

15. That all forms of acknowledged beauty are composed exclusively of curves will, I believe, be at once allowed; but that which there will be need more especially to prove is, the subtlety and constancy of curvature in all natural forms whatsoever. I believe that,

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except in crystals,—in certain mountain forms admitted for the sake of sublimity or contrast—(as in the slope of débris), in rays of light,—in the levels of calm water and alluvial land,—* and in some few organic developments, there are no lines nor surfaces of nature without curvature; though as we before saw in clouds, more especially in their under lines towards the horizon, and in vast and extended plains, right lines are often suggested which are not actual. Without these we could not be sensible of the value of the contrasting curves; and while, therefore, for the most part the eye is fed, in natural forms, with a grace of curvature which no hand nor instrument can follow, other means are provided to give

* (These seem important exceptions; they are not so, and are themselves liable to much exception. Crystals are indeed subject to rectilinear limitations; but their real surfaces are continually curved. Rays of light are varied by infinite gradation: the level of calm water is only right-lined when it is shoreless.)

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beauty to those surfaces which are admitted for contrast, as in water by its reflection of the gradations which it possesses not itself. In freshly broken ground which Nature has not yet had time to model, in quarries and pits which are none of her cutting, in those convulsions and evidences of convulsion of whose influence on ideal landscape I shall presently have occasion to speak, and generally in all ruin and disease, and interference of one order of being with another (as in the browsing line of park trees), the curves vanish, and violently opposed or broken and unmeaning lines take their place.

16. What curvature is to lines, gradation is to shades and colours. It is their infinity, and divides them into an infinite number of degrees. Absolutely without gradation no natural surface can possibly be, except under circumstances of so rare conjunction as to amount to a lusus naturæ: for we have seen

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that few surfaces are without curvature, and every curved surface must be gradated by the nature of light; and for the gradation of the few plane surfaces that exist, means are provided in local colour, aërial perspective, reflected lights, etc., from which it is but barely conceivable that they should ever escape. For instances of the complete absence of gradation we must look to man's work, or to his disease and decrepitude. Compare the gradated colours of the rainbow with the stripes of a target, and the gradual deepening of the youthful blood in the cheek with an abrupt patch of rouge, or with the sharply drawn veins of old age.

17. Gradation is so inseparable a quality of all natural shade, that the eye refuses in painting to understand a shadow which appears without it; while, on the other hand, nearly all the gradations of nature are so subtle, and between degrees of tint so slightly

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separated, that no human hand can in any wise equal, or do anything more than suggest the idea of them. In proportion to the space over which gradation extends, and to its invisible subtlety, is its grandeur: and in proportion to its narrow limits and violent degrees, its vulgarity. In Correggio, it is morbid in spite of its refinement of execution; because the eye is drawn to it, and it is made the most observable character of the picture; whereas natural gradation is for ever escaping observation to that degree that the greater part of artists in working from nature see it not, but either lay down such continuous lines and colours as are both disagreeable and impossible; or, receiving the necessity of gradation as a principle instead of a fact,* use it in violently exaggerated measure, and so

* (I meant, as a trick for the emphasis of colour, instead of an exponent of actual form or effect. This, however, is done legitimately in illumination, and other merely decorative, not imitative, coloured work.)

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lose both the dignity of their own work, and, by the constant dwelling of their eyes upon exaggerations, their sensibility to that of the natural forms. So that we find the majority of painters divided between the two evil extremes of insufficiency and affectation; and only the greatest men capable of making gradation continuous, and yet extended over enormous spaces, and within degrees of narrow difference, as in the body of a strong light.*

18. From the necessity of gradation results what is commonly given as a rule of art, though its authority as a rule obtains only from its being a fact of nature, that the extremes of high light and pure colour can exist only in points. The common rules respecting sixths and eighths, held concerning light and shade, are entirely absurd and conventional; according to the subject and

* (This is a valuable practical passage, of which the substance is often reiterated in my later works.)

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the effect of light, the greater part of the picture will be, or ought to be, light or dark, but that principle which is not conventional is, that of all light, however high, there is some part that is higher than the rest; and that of all colour, however pure, there is some part that is purer than the rest; and that generally of all shade, however deep, there is some part deeper than the rest, though this last fact is frequently sacrificed in art, owing to the narrowness of its means. But on the right gradation and focusing of light and colour depends, in great measure, the value of both. Of this I have spoken sufficiently in pointing out the singular constancy of it in the works of Turner. And it is generally to be observed that even raw and valueless colour, if rightly and subtly gradated, will, in some measure, stand for light; and that the most transparent and perfect hue will be, in some measure, unsatisfactory if entirely unvaried. I believe

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the early skies of Raffaelle owe their luminousness more to their untraceable and subtle gradation than to inherent quality of hue.

19. Such are the expressions of infinity which we find in creation,* of which the importance is to be estimated rather by their frequency than by their distinctness. Let, however, the reader bear constantly in mind that I insist not on his accepting any interpretation of mine, but only on his dwelling so long on those objects which he perceives to be beautiful, as to determine whether the qualities to which I trace their beauty be necessarily there or not. Farther expressions

* (I meant, "in those conditions of the creation which appeal to the pleasure of the human eyes." Of course those which appeal to thought are themselves infinite. This last paragraph is heedlessly and insolently written; yet not wholly valueless, for the gist of it in the close is true; that the lessons of Heaven are not written illegibly for its creatures; and that all the smoke of the darkness which hides the Maker from His world, is of the world's making.

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of infinity there are in the mystery of Nature, and, in some measure, in her vastness; but these are dependent on our own imperfections, and therefore, though they produce sublimity, they are unconnected with beauty. For that which we foolishly call vastness is, rightly considered, not more wonderful, not more impressive, than that which we insolently call littleness: and the infinity of God is not mysterious, it is only unfathomable; not concealed, but incomprehensible; it is a clear infinity, the darkness of the pure unsearchable sea.

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CHAPTER II.

Of Unity, or the Type of the Divine Comprehensiveness.

1. "ALL things," says Hooker, "God only excepted, besides the nature which they have in themselves, receive externally some perfection from other things." Hence the appearance of separation or isolation in anything, and of self-dependence, is an appearance of imperfection: and all appearances of connection and brotherhood are pleasant and right, both as significative of perfection in the things united, and as typical of that Unity which we attribute to God, and of which our true conception is rightly explained and limited by Dr. Brown in his ninety-second lecture; that Unity which consists not in his own singleness

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or separation, but in the necessity of his inherence in all things that be, without which no creature of any kind could hold existence for a moment. Which necessity of divine essence I think it better to speak of as Comprehensiveness, than as Unity; because unity is often understood in the sense of oneness or singleness, instead of universality; whereas the only unity which by any means can become grateful or an object of hope to men, and whose types therefore in material things can be beautiful, is that on which turned the last words and prayer of Christ before His crossing of the Kedron brook. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee."

2. And so there is not any matter, nor any spirit, nor any creature, but it is capable of a unity of some kind with other creatures; and

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in that unity is its perfection and theirs, and a pleasure also for the beholding of all other creatures that can behold. So the unity of spirits* is partly in their sympathy, and partly in their giving and taking, and always in their love; and these are their delight and their strength; for their strength is in their co-working and army fellowship, and their delight is in the giving and receiving of alternate and perpetual good; their inseparable dependency on each other's being, and their essential and perfect depending on their Creator's. And so the unity of earthly creatures is their power and their peace; not

* (I meant, of course, human spirits: modern desecration of the latter word has cast so much shadow on it that one cannot read it without shrinking.

This second paragraph is one of the most valuable in essential contents I have ever written: but the literary art and pedantry of it, employed to express the most solemn of truths in a tinkle that shall be pleasant to the ear, are now very grievous to me. It was well meant at the time, however, and may perhaps yet have its use.)

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like the dead and cold peace of undisturbed stones and solitary mountains; but the living peace of trust, and the living power of support; of hands that hold each other and are still. And so the unity of matter is, in its noblest form, the organization of it which builds it up into temples for the spirit; and in its lower form, the sweet and strange affinity which gives to it the glory of its orderly elements, and the fair variety of change and assimilation that turns the dust into the crystal, and separates the waters that be above the firmament from the waters that be beneath: and, in its lowest form, it is the working and walking and clinging together that gives their power to the winds, and its syllables and soundings to the air, and their weight to the waves, and their burning to the sunbeams, and their stability to the mountains, and to every creature whatsoever operation is for its glory and for others' good.

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3. Now of that which is thus necessary to the perfection of all things, all appearance, sign, type, or suggestion must be beautiful, in whatever matter it may appear: and the appearance of some species of unity is, in the most determined sense of the word, essential to the perfection of beauty in lines, colours, or forms.

But of the appearances of unity, as of unity itself, there are several kinds, which it will be found hereafter convenient to consider separately.* Thus there is the Unity of different and separate things, subjected to one and the same influence, which may be called Subjectional Unity; and this is the unity of the clouds, as they are driven by the parallel winds, or as they are ordered by the electric currents; this the unity of the sea waves, this of the

* (Yes, I should rather think so; and they ought to have been *named* separately, too, and very slowly; and not upset in a heap on the floor, as they are in this terrific two-page sentence. It is all right, however, when once it is sorted. See note at end of the chapter.)

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bending and undulation of the forest masses; and in creatures capable of will it is the unity of will or of impulse. And there is Unity of Origin, which we may call Original Unity; which is of things arising from one spring and source, and speaking always of this their brotherhood; and this, in matter, is the unity of the branches of the trees, and of the petals and starry rays of flowers, and of the beams of light; and in spiritual creatures it is their filial relation to Him from whom they have their being. And there is unity of Sequence, which is that of things that form links in chains, and steps in ascents, and stages in journeys; and this, in matter, is the unity of communicable forces in their continuance from one thing to another; and it is the passing upwards and downwards of beneficent effects among all things, the melody of sounds, the continuity of lines, and the orderly succession of motions and times; and in spiritual creatures

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it is their own constant building up, by true knowledge and continuous reasoning, to higher perfection, and the singleness and straightforwardness of their tendencies to more complete communion with God. And there is the unity of Membership, which we may call Essential Unity, which is the unity of things separately imperfect into a perfect whole; and this is the great unity of which other unities are but parts and means; it is in matter the harmony of sounds and consistency of bodies, and among spiritual creatures their love and happiness and very life in God.

4. Now of the nature of this last kind of unity, the most important whether in moral or in those material things with which we are at present concerned, there is this necessary to be observed; that it cannot exist between things similar to each other. Two or more equal and like things cannot be members one of another, nor can they form one, or a whole thing. Two

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they must remain, both in nature and in our conception, so long as they remain alike, unless they are united by a third different from both. Thus the arms, which are like each other, remain two arms in our conception. They could not be united by a third arm ; they must be united by something which is not an arm, and which, imperfect without them as they without it, shall form one perfect body. Nor is unity even thus accomplished, without a difference and opposition of direction in the setting on of the like members. Therefore, among all things which are to have unity of membership one with another, there must be difference or variety ; and though it is possible that many like things may be made members of one body, yet it is remarkable that this structure appears characteristic of the lower creatures, rather than the higher, as the many legs of a caterpillar, and the many arms and suckers of the radiata ; and that, as we rise in

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order of being, the number of similar members becomes less, and their structure commonly seems based on the principle of the unity of two things by a third, as Plato states it in the Timæus, § 11.

5. Hence, out of the necessity of Unity, arises that of Variety ; a necessity often more vividly, though never so deeply felt, because lying at the surface of things, and assisted by an influential principle of our nature, the love of change, and by the power of contrast. But it is a mistake which has led to many unfortunate results, in matters respecting art, to insist on any inherent agreeableness of variety, without reference to a farther end. For it is not even true that variety as such, and in its highest degree, is beautiful. A patched* garment of many colours is by no means so agreeable as one of a single and

* (I meant, *discordantly* patched—else the sentence is simply untrue.)

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continuous hue; the splendid colours of many birds are eminently painful from their violent separation, and inordinate variety, while the pure and colourless swan is, under certain circumstances, the most beautiful of all feathered creatures. A forest of all manner of trees is poor, if not disagreeable in effect; * a mass of one species of tree is sublime. It is therefore only harmonious and chordal variety, that variety which is necessary to secure and extend unity (for the greater the number of objects which by their differences become members of one another, the more extended and sublime is their unity), which is rightly agreeable; and so I name not Variety as essential to beauty, because it is only so in a secondary and casual sense.†

* Spenser's *various* forest is the Forest of Error.

† It must be matter of no small wonderment to practical men, to observe how grossly the nature and connection of Unity and Variety have been misunderstood and mis-stated

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6. Of the Love of Change as a principle of human nature, and the pleasantness of variety resulting from it, something has already been said (Sec. I: Ch. IV. § 4); only as in that place I was opposing the idea that our being familiar with objects was the cause of our delight in them, so here I have to oppose the contrary position that their strangeness is the cause of it. For neither familiarity nor strangeness has more operation on, or connection with, impressions of one sense than of another; and they have less power over the impressions of sense,

by those writers upon taste who have been guided by no experience of art; most singularly perhaps by Mr. Alison, who, confounding Unity with *Uniformity*, and leading his readers through thirty pages of discussion respecting *Uniformity* and Variety, the intelligibility of which is not by any means increased by his supposing Uniformity to be capable of existence in single things! at last substitutes for these two terms, sufficiently contradictory already, those of Similarity and Dissimilarity, the reconciliation of which opposites in one thing we must, I believe, leave Mr. Alison to accomplish.

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generally, than over the intellect in its joyful accepting of fresh knowledge, and dull contemplation of that it has long possessed. Only in their operation on the senses they act contrarily at different times ; as for instance, the newness of a dress, or of some kind of unaccustomed food, may make it for a time delightful, but as the novelty passes away, so also may the delight, yielding to disgust or indifference ; which in their turn, as custom begins to operate, may pass into affection and craving, and that which was first a luxury, and then a matter of indifference, become a necessity :* whereas in subjects of the intellect, the chief delight they convey is dependent upon their being newly and vividly comprehended ; and as they become subjects of contemplation they lose their value, and become tasteless and unregarded, except as instruments

* (I have cut out here a quotation from Aristotle—which was only put in to show that I had read him.)

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for the reaching of others; only that though they sink down into the shadowy, effectless, heap of things indifferent, which we pack, and crush down, and stand upon, to reach things new, they sparkle afresh at intervals as we stir them by throwing a new stone into the heap, and letting the newly admitted lights play upon them. And, both in subjects of the intellect and the senses, it is to be remembered that the love of change is a weakness and imperfection of our nature, (and implies in it the state of probation;)* and that it is to teach us that things about us here are not meant for our continual possession or satisfaction, that ever such passion of change was put in us as that "custom lies upon us with a weight, heavy as frost, and deep almost as life;" and only such weak thews and baby grasp given to

* (The words I have now put in parenthesis are false. Heaven itself may be as changeful as a kaleidoscope, for aught we know.)

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our intellect, as that "the best things we do are painful, and the exercise of them grievous, being continued without intermission, so as in those very actions whereby we are especially perfected in this life we are not able to persist."*

7. And so it will be found that they are the weakest-minded and the hardest-hearted men that most love variety and change: for the weakest minded are those who both wonder most at things new, and digest worst things old; in so far that everything they have lies rusty, and loses lustre for want of use, neither do they make any stir among their possessions, nor look over them to see what may be made of them, nor keep any great store, nor are householders with store houses of things new and old; but they catch at the new-fashioned

* (Hooker, I think, by the sound of it: to whom Pope would have quietly and rightly answered—"Why *wish* to persist, then, when God says you have done enough?")

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garments, and let the moth and thief look after the rest: and the hardest-hearted men are those that least feel the endearing and binding power of custom, and hold on by no cords of affection to any shore, but drive with the waves that cast up mire and dirt. And certainly it is not to be held that the perception of beauty, and desire of it, are greatest in the hardest heart and weakest brain;* but the love of variety is so, and therefore variety can be no cause of the beautiful, except, as I have said, when it is necessary for the perception of unity. Neither is there any better test of beauty than its surviving or annihilating the love of change; a test which the best judges of art have need frequently to use; for there is much that surprises by its brilliancy, or attracts by its singularity, that can hardly but by course of

* (Not proved. The adversary may ask,—and lately, not without good grounds for enquiry,—Why is it not to be held?)

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time, though assuredly it *will* by course of time, be winnowed away from the right and real beauty whose retentive power is for ever on the increase, a bread of the soul for which the hunger is continual.

8. Receiving, therefore, variety only as that which accomplishes unity, or makes it perceived, its operation is found to be very precious, both in that which I have called Unity of Subjection, and Unity of Sequence, as well as in Unity of Membership;* for although things in all respects the same may, indeed, be subjected to one influence, yet the power of the influence, and their obedience to it, are best seen by varied operation of

* (The four unities above specified were,—

1. Of Subjection.
2. Of Origin.
3. Of Sequence.
4. Of Membership.

That of Origin is omitted here, because things springing from one root must be of one nature.)

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them on their individual differences; as in clouds and waves there is a glorious unity of rolling, wrought out by the wild and wonderful differences of their absolute forms: which differences, if removed, would leave in them only multitudinous and petty repetition, instead of the majestic oneness of shared passion. And so in the waves and clouds of human multitude, when they are filled with one thought: as we find frequently in the works of the early Italian men of earnest purpose, who despising, or happily ignorant of, the sophistications of theories and the proprieties of composition, indicated by perfect similarity of action and gesture on the one hand, and by the infinite and truthful variation of expression on the other, the most sublime strength, because the most absorbing unity, of multitudinous passion that ever human heart conceived. Hence, in the cloister of St. Mark's, the intense, fixed, statue-like

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silence of ineffable adoration upon the spirits in prison at the feet of Christ, side by side, the hands lifted, and the knees bowed, and the lips trembling together;* and in St. Domenico of Fiesole,† that whirlwind rush of the angels and the redeemed souls round about Him at His resurrection, in which we hear the blast of the horizontal trumpets mixed with the dying clangour of their ingathered wings. The same great feeling occurs throughout the works of the serious men, though most

* Fra Angelico's fresco, in a cell of the upper cloister. He treated the subject frequently. Another characteristic example occurs in the Vita di Cristo of the Academy, a series now unfortunately destroyed by the picture cleaners. Simon Memmi in Santa Maria Novella has given another very beautiful instance. In Giotto the principle is universal, though his multitudes are somewhat more dramatically and powerfully varied in gesture than Angelico's. In Mino da Fiesole's altar-piece in the church of St. Ambrogio at Florence, close by Cosimo Rosselli's fresco, there is a beautiful example in marble.

† The predella of the picture behind the altar.

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intensely in Angelico; and it is well to compare with it the vileness and falseness of all that succeeded, when men had begun to bring to the cross-foot, their systems instead of their sorrow. Take as the most marked and degraded instance, perhaps to be anywhere found, Bronzino's treatment of the same subject (Christ visiting the spirits in prison), in the picture now in the Tuscan room of the Uffizii; which, vile as it is in colour, vacant in invention, void in light and shade, a heap of cumbrous nothingness, and sickening offensiveness, is of all its voids most void in this, that the academy models therein huddled together at the bottom, show not so much unity or community of attention to the academy model with the flag in its hand above, as a street crowd would to a fresh-staged charlatan. Some *point* to the God who has burst the gates of death, as if the rest were incapable of distinguishing Him for

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themselves ; and others turn their backs upon Him, to show their unagitated faces to the spectator.*

9. In Unity of Sequence, the effect of variety is best exemplified by the melodies of music, wherein, by the differences of the notes, they are connected with each other in certain pleasant relations. This connection, taking place in quantities, is Proportion, respecting which certain general principles must be noted, as the subject is one open to many errors, and obscurely treated of by writers on art.

10. Proportion is of two distinct kinds :†

* (I had much more heart power of conceiving the real scenes when I wrote this book than I have now, and was therefore a far better judge of religious art. I have just been looking at all these pictures again, and find myself a little weary of rows of heads turned in the same direction ; and disposed sometimes to say a good word even for Bronzino. in his portraits.—Florence, September, 1882.)

† (This digression on Proportion, as one of the elements of Unity of Sequence, contains a great deal that is extremely right and useful ; but it ought to have been given in a separate chapter.)

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Apparent, when it takes place between quantities for the sake of connection only, without any ultimate object or casual necessity; and *Constructive*, when it has reference to some function to be discharged by the quantities, depending on their proportion. From the confusion of these two kinds of proportion have arisen the greater part of the erroneous conceptions of the influence of either.

(A) Apparent Proportion, or the sensible relation of quantities, is one of the most important means of obtaining unity amongst things which otherwise must have remained distinct in similarity; and as it may consist with every other kind of unity,* and persist when every other means of it fails, it may be considered as lying at the root of most of

* (Thus the proportions of increase in the lobes, or interval between the serrations of a leaf are associated with the beautiful Unity of Origin in the divergence of the ribs from the stem.)

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our impressions of the beautiful. There is no sense of rightness or wrongness connected with it; no sense of utility, propriety, or expediency. These ideas enter only where the proportion of quantities has reference to some function to be performed by them. It cannot be asserted that it is right or that it is wrong that A should be to B, as B to C; unless A, B, and C have some desirable operation dependent on that relation. But nevertheless it may be highly agreeable to the eye that A, B, and C, if visible things, should have visible connection of ratio, even though nothing be accomplished by such connection.

(B) On the other hand, Constructive Proportion, or the adaptation of quantities to functions, is agreeable, not (necessarily) to the eye, but to the mind, which is cognizant of the function to be performed. Thus the pleasantness or rightness of the

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proportions of a column depends not on the mere relation of diameter and height (which is not proportion at all, for proportion is between three terms at least); but on three other involved terms, the strength of materials, the weight to be borne, and the scale of the building. The proportions of a wooden column are wrong in a stone one, and of a small building, wrong in a large one;*

* It seems never to have been rightly understood, even by the more intelligent among our architects, that Proportion is in any way connected with positive size; it seems to be held among them that a small building may be expanded to a large one merely by proportionally expanding all its parts; and that the harmony will be equally agreeable on whatever scale it be rendered. Now this is true of apparent proportion, but utterly false of constructive; and, as much of the value of architectural proportion *is* constructive, the error is often productive of the most painful results. It may be best illustrated by observing the conditions of proportion in animals. Admiration has often been thoughtlessly claimed for the strength, supposed gigantic, of insects and smaller animals; as being capable of lifting weights, leaping distances, and surmounting obstacles, of proportion apparently over

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and this owing solely to mechanical considerations, which have no more connection with ideas of beauty, than the relation between the arms of a lever adapted to the raising

whelming. Thus the Formica Herculanea will lift in its mouth, and brandish like a baton, sticks thicker than itself and six times its length, all the while scrambling over crags of about the proportionate height of the Cliffs of Dover, three or four in a minute. There is nothing extraordinary in this, nor any exertion of strength necessarily greater than human, in proportion to the size of the body. For it is evident that if the *bulk* and *strength* of any creature be expanded or diminished in proportion to each other, the distance through which it can leap, the time it can maintain exertion, or any other third term resultant, remains *constant;* that is, diminish weight of powder and of ball proportionately, and the distance carried is constant, or nearly so. Thus, a grasshopper, a man, and a giant 100 feet high, supposing their muscular strength equally proportioned to their size, can, or could, all leap, not proportionate distance, but the same, or nearly the same distance; say, four feet the grasshopper, or forty-eight times his length; six feet the man, or his length exactly; ten feet the giant, or the tenth of his length; some allowance being made for the greater resistance of the air to the smaller animal, and

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of a given weight; and yet it is highly agreeable to perceive that such constructive proportion has been duly observed, as it is agreeable to see that anything is fit for its

other slight disadvantages. Hence, all small animals can, proportionally, perform feats of strength and agility, exactly so much greater than those possible to large ones, as the animals themselves are smaller; and to enable an elephant to leap like a grasshopper, he must be endowed with strength a million times greater in *proportion* to his size. Now the consequence of this general mechanical law is, that as we increase the scale of animals, their means of power, whether muscles of motion or bones of support, must be increased in a more than proportionate degree, or they become utterly unwieldy and incapable of motion. And there is a limit to this increase of strength. If the elephant had legs as long as a spider's, no combination of animal matter that could be hide-bound would have strength enough to move them. To support the megatherium, we must have a humerus a foot in diameter, though perhaps not more than two feet long, and that in a vertical position under him; while the gnat can hang on the window-frame, and poise himself to sting, in the middle of crooked stilts like threads, stretched out to ten times the breadth of his body on each side. Increase the size of the megatherium a little more, and no phosphate

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purpose or for ours, and also that it has been the result of intelligence in the artificer of it; so that we sometimes feel a pleasure in apparent non-adaptation, if it be a sign of

of lime will bear him: he would crush his own legs to powder. (Compare Sir Charles Bell, Bridgewater Treatise on the Hand, p. 296, and the note.) Hence there is not only a limit to the size of animals, in the conditions of matter, but to their activity also, the largest being always least capable of exertion: and this would be the case to a far greater extent, but that nature beneficently alters her proportions as she increases her scale; giving slender frames to the smaller tribes, and ponderous strength to the larger. So in vegetables, compare the stalk of an ear of oat, and the trunk of a pine, the mechanical structure being in both the same. So also in waves, of which the large never can be mere exaggerations of the small, but have different slopes and curvatures. So in mountains, and all things else, necessarily, and from ordinary mechanical laws. Whence in architecture, according to the scale of the building, its proportions *must* be altered constructively, and ought to be so, apparently, even where the constructive expedients are capable of disguise: and I have no hesitation in calling that unmeaning exaggeration of parts in St. Peter's, of flutings, volutes, friezes, &c., in the proportions of a smaller building, a vulgar blunder, and

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ingenuity, as in the unnatural and seemingly impossible lightness of Gothic spires and roofs.

Now, the errors against which I would caution the reader in this matter* are three. The first is, the overlooking or denial of the power of Apparent Proportion, of which power

one that destroys all the majesty that the building ought to have had: and still more I should so call all imitations and adaptations of *large* buildings on a *small* scale. The true test of right proportion is, that it shall itself inform us of the scale of the building, and be such that even in a drawing it shall instantly induce the conception of the actual size, or size intended. I know not what Fuseli means by that aphorism of his :—

"Disproportion of parts is the element of hugeness; proportion of grandeur. All Gothic styles of Architecture are huge. The Greek alone is grand."

When a building *is* vast, it ought to look so; and the proportion is right which exhibits its vastness. Nature loses no size by her proportion; her buttressed mountains have more of Gothic than of Greek in them.

* (I meant, "with respect to the subject of Proportion altogether;" the two kinds of it being both considered in the definitions of popular error.)

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neither Burke, nor any other writer whose works I have met with, takes cognizance. The second is, the attribution of *beauty* to the appearances of Constructive Proportion. And the third, the denial, with Burke, of *any* value or agreeableness in Constructive Proportion.

11. Now, the full proof of the influence of Apparent Proportion, I must reserve for illustration by diagram; one or two instances, however, may be given at present, for the better understanding of its nature.

We have already asserted that all curves are more beautiful than right lines. All curves, however, are not equally beautiful, and their differences of beauty depend on the different proportions borne to each other by those infinitely small right lines of which they may be conceived as composed.

When these lines are equal and contain equal angles, there can be no connection nor unity of sequence in them. The resulting curve, the

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circle, is therefore the least beautiful of all curves.

When the lines bear to each other some certain proportion: or when, the lines remaining equal, the angles vary; or when by any means whatsoever, and in whatever complicated modes, such differences as shall imply connection are established between the infinitely small segments, the resulting curves become beautiful. The simplest of the beautiful curves are the conic, and the various spirals; but it is difficult to trace any ground of superiority or inferiority among the infinite numbers of the higher curves. I believe that almost all are beautiful in their own nature, and that their comparative beauty depends on the constant quantities involved in their equations. Of this point I shall speak hereafter at greater length.

12. The universal forces of nature, and the individual energies of the matter submitted to

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them, are so appointed and balanced, that they are continually bringing out curves of this kind in all visible forms; and that circular lines become nearly impossible under any circumstances. The acceleration, for instance, of velocity, in streams that descend from hill-sides, gradually increases their power of erosion, and in the same degree the rate of curvature in the descent of the slope, until at a certain degree of steepness this descent meets, and is concealed by, the straight line of the detritus. The junction of this right line with the plain is again modified by the farther bounding of the larger blocks, and by the successively diminishing scale of landslips caused by the erosion at the bottom.* So that the whole

* (This is, I believe, the first intimation given in my writings of the care with which they were to enforce and follow out the study of abstract curvature; a study which, as yet unknown in our drawing schools, is nevertheless the indispensable basis of all noble design in art, and all accurate observation of external form by science. Twenty

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contour of the hill is one of curvature; first, gradually increasing in rapidity to the maximum steepness of which the particular rock is capable, and then decreasing in a decreasing ratio, until it arrives at the plain-level. This type of form, modified of course more or less by the original boldness of the mountain, and dependent on its age, its constituent rock, and the circumstances of its exposure, is yet in its general formula applicable to all.* So the curves of all things in motion, and of all organic forms, most rude and simple in the shell spirals, and most complicated in the muscular lines of the higher animals.

This influence of Apparent Proportion, a

years of useless debate and senseless theory respecting glacier motion might have been spared us, if Professor Agassiz had been able to draw with his own hand, accurately, a single curve of mountain crest, glacier wave, river's bank, or fish's tail.)

* (It has been mathematically analyzed by Mr. Alfred Tylor, who was, I believe, the first investigator of the laws of curve in descent of great rivers.)

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proportion, be it observed, which has no reference to ultimate ends, but which is itself, seemingly, the end of operation to many of the forces of nature, is therefore at the root of all our delight in any beautiful form whatsoever. For no form can be beautiful which is not composed of curves whose unity is secured by relations of this kind.

13. Not only however in curvature, but in all associations of lines whatsoever, it is desirable that there should be reciprocal relation, and the eye is unhappy without perception of it. It is utterly vain to endeavour to reduce this proportion to finite rules, for it is as various as musical melody, and the laws to which it is subject are of the same general kind; so that the determination of right or wrong proportion is as much a matter of feeling and experience as the appreciation of good musical composition. Not but that there is a science of both, and principles which may

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not be infringed; but that, within these limits, the liberty of invention is infinite, and the degrees of excellence infinite also. Whence the curious error of Burke, in imagining that because he could not fix upon some one given proportion of lines as better than any other, therefore proportion had no value or influence at all. It would be as just to conclude that there is no such thing as melody in music, because no one melody can be fixed upon as best.*

14. The argument of Burke on this subject is summed up in the following words:— "Examine the head of a beautiful horse, find what proportion that bears to his body and to his limbs, and what relations these have

* (The reader will please observe that a Positive Good, and Positive Evil, are always assumed in my writings as existing in total independence of our opinions about such good and evil. It is for us to find out what *they are*; not to concern ourselves with what we, or anybody else, happen to think.)

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to each other; and when you have settled these proportions as a standard of beauty, then take a dog or cat, or any other animal, and examine how far the same proportions between their heads and their necks, between those and the body, and so on, are found to hold; I think we may safely say, that they differ in every species, yet that there are individuals found in a great many species so differing, that have a very striking beauty. Now if it be allowed that very different, and even contrary, forms and dispositions are consistent with beauty, it amounts, I believe, to a concession, that no certain measures operating from a natural principle are necessary to produce it, at least so far as the brute species is concerned."*

* (This is an admirable sentence, and although there are fallacies in it—and even more than the three which are examined in the following paragraph, they are not, as with Alison, fallacies of logic, but only omissions of points needing to be relatively considered. Burke is perfectly

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In this argument there are three very palpable fallacies. The first is, the rough application of measurement to the heads, necks, and limbs, without observing the subtle differences of proportion and position of parts in the members themselves; for it would be strange if the different adjustment of the ears and brow in the dog and horse, did not require a harmonizing difference of adjustment in the head and neck. The second fallacy is that above specified, the supposition that proportion cannot be beautiful if susceptible of variation; whereas the whole meaning of the term has reference to the adjustment and functional correspondence of *infinitely variable*

right, as far as he goes, or intended to go; he meant only to prove that the ratios of definite number which were beautiful in one thing, were not so in another; and he was the first English writer on art who used his common sense and reason on this subject. The essay on the Sublime and Beautiful is, like all his writing, extremely rational and forcible; and deserves most careful and reverent reading.)

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quantities. And the third error is, the oversight of the very important fact, that, although "different and even contrary forms and dispositions are consistent with beauty," they are by no means consistent with equal *degrees* of beauty: so that, while we find in all animals such proportion and harmony of form as gift them with positive agreeableness consistent with the station and dignity of each, we perceive, also, a better proportion in some (as the horse, eagle, lion, and man, for instance,) expressing the nobler functions and more exalted powers of the animal.

15. And this allowed superiority of some animal forms is, in itself, argument against the second error above named,* that of attributing the sensation of beauty to the perception of Expedient or Constructive Proportion.

* (Page 71. This whole chapter is terribly confused: but the gist of it is all right, and worth the reader's pains to disentangle.)

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(For everything that God has made is equally well constructed with reference to its intended functions.)* But all things are not equally beautiful. The megatherium is absolutely as well proportioned, in the adaptation of parts to purposes, as the horse or the swan; but by no means so handsome as either. The fact is, that the perception of expediency of proportion can but rarely affect our estimates of beauty, for it implies a knowledge which we very rarely and imperfectly possess, and the want of which we tacitly acknowledge.†

Let us consider that instance of the proportion of the stalk of a plant to its head,‡

* (The sentence put in brackets is a mere piece of pious insolence. No mortal has any business with God's intentions, or pretence to insight into them; but assuredly some animals are awkwardly made, and others well made, with reference to similar functions.)

† (If we acknowledged it openly, we should be wiser.)

‡ (The passage ought to have been quoted; but it is to the same intent as the preceding one.)

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given by Burke. In order to judge of the expediency of this proportion, we must know, First, the scale of the plant; for the smaller the scale, the longer the stem may safely be: Secondly, the toughness of the materials of the stem, and the mode of their mechanical structure: Thirdly, the specific gravity of the head: Fourthly, the position of the head which the nature of fructification requires: Fifthly, the accidents and influences to which the situation for which the plant was created is exposed. Until we know all this, we cannot say that proportion or disproportion exists: and because we cannot know all this, the idea of expedient proportion enters but slightly into our impression of vegetable beauty, but rather, since the very existence of the plant proves that these proportions have been observed, and we know that nothing but our own ignorance prevents us from perceiving them, we take their accuracy on trust, and are

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delighted by the variety of results which the Divine intelligence has attained in the various involutions of these quantities; and perhaps most when, to outward appearance, such proportions have been neglected; more by the slenderness of the campanula* than the security of the pine.

16. What is obscure in plants, is utterly concealed in animals, owing to the greater number of means employed and functions performed. To judge of Expedient Proportion in *them*, we must know all that each member has to do, its bones, its muscles, and the amount of nervous energy communicable to them; and yet, as we have more experience and instinctive sense of the strength of muscles than of wood, and more practical knowledge of the use of a head or a foot than of a flower or a stem, we are

* (Meaning blue-bell, or Scottish hare-bell: but I spoiled the clearness of idea in the sentence, for the sake of the alliteration of panula and pine.)

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much more likely to presume upon our judgment respecting proportions here; and are not afraid to assert that the plesiosaurus and camelopard have necks too long, that the turnspit has legs too short, and the elephant a body too ponderous.

But the painfulness arising from the idea of this being the case is occasioned partly by our sympathy with the animal, partly by our false apprehension of incompletion in the Divine work;* nor in either case has it any connection with impressions of that typical

* (For the just and severe reproof of which, compare Sir Charles Bell On the Hand, pp. 31, 32. (I can't compare Sir Charles, at present:—and don't want to, for the real impertinence to be reproved is in supposing ourselves to be able to understand the depths and meanings of the Creation as if we had been by, all the time. In practical and visible fact, some creatures *are* weak, incomplete, and in that degree ugly, by comparison with others; and a lizard who shakes his tail off in a tremor, is as much inferior to a dog who can wag it comfortably, as a feeble person who changes his mind in a minute is to a man who can both pause and persevere.)

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beauty of which we are at present speaking; though some, perhaps, with that vital beauty which will hereafter come under discussion.

17. I wish therefore the reader to hold, respecting proportion generally:

1st, That Apparent Proportion, or the melodious connection of quantities, is a cause of (visible) unity, and therefore one of the sources of all beautiful form.

2ndly, That Constructive Proportion is agreeable to the mind when it is known, or supposed; and that its seeming absence is painful in a like degree; but that this pleasure and pain have nothing in common with those dependent on Ideas of Beauty.

Farther illustrations of the value of Unity I shall reserve for our detailed examination, as the bringing them forward here would interfere with the general idea of the subject-matter of the Theoretic faculty which I wish succinctly to convey.

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CHAPTER III.

Of Repose, or the Type of Divine Permanence.

1. THERE is probably no necessity more imperatively felt by the artist, no test more unfailing of the greatness of artistical treatment, than that of the appearance of repose; yet there is no quality whose semblance in matter is more difficult to define or illustrate. Nevertheless, I believe that our instinctive love of it, as well as the cause to which I attribute that love, (although here also, as in the former cases, I contend not for the interpretation, but for the fact,*) will be

* (The reader will please notice these guarding sentences: they were perfectly sincere; and it is always open to the rationalist to reject the metaphysical conclusions, or propositions, in this book, while he may accept with confidence its statements of all primary laws of judgment in design.)

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readily allowed by the reader. As opposed to passion, change, fitfulness, or laborious exertion, Repose is the especial and separating characteristic of the eternal mind and power. It is the "I am" of the Creator opposed to the "I become" of all creatures; it is the sign alike of the supreme knowledge which is incapable of surprise, the supreme power which is incapable of labour, the supreme volition which is incapable of change; it is the stillness of the beams of the eternal chambers, laid upon the variable waters of ministering creatures. And as we saw before that the infinity which was a type of the Divine nature on the one hand, became yet more desirable on the other from its peculiar address to our prison hopes, and to the expectations of an unsatisfied and unaccomplished existence; so the types of this third attribute of the Deity might seem to have been rendered farther attractive to mortal instinct through the infliction upon

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the fallen creature of a curse necessitating a labour, once unnatural, and still most painful; so that the desire of rest planted in the heart is no sensual nor unworthy one, but a longing for renovation, and for escape from a state whose every phase is mere preparation for another equally transitory, to one in which permanence shall have become possible through perfection. Hence the great call of Christ to men, that call on which St. Augustine fixed as the essential expression of Christian hope, is accompanied by the promise of rest;* and the death-bequest of Christ to men is peace.

2. Repose, as it is expressed in material things, is either a simple appearance of permanence and quietness, as in the massy forms of a mountain or rock, accompanied by the lulling effect of all mighty sight and sound, which all feel and none define (it would be

* Matt. xi. 28.

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less sacred if more explicable),* or else it is repose proper, the rest of things in which there is vitality, or capability of motion actual or imagined: and with respect to these, the expression of repose is greater in proportion to the amount and sublimity of the action which is *not* taking place, as well as to the intensity of the negation of it. Thus we do not speak of repose in a pebble, because the motion of a pebble has nothing in it of energy or vitality, neither its repose, of stability. But having once seen a great rock come down a mountain side, we have a noble sensation of its rest, now bedded immovably among the fern; because the power and fearfulness of its motion were great, and its stability and negation of motion are now great in proportion. Hence the imagination, which delights in nothing more than in the enhancing of the

* ("The crests and chasms of the mountains are asleep." It was quoted in Greek, and I forget from whom.)

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characters of repose, effects this usually by either attributing to things visibly energetic an ideal stability, or to things visibly stable an ideal activity or vitality. Thus Wordsworth speaks of the cloud, which in itself has too much of changefulness for his purpose, as one

> "That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
> And moveth altogether if it move at all."

And again the children, which, that it may remove from them the child-restlessness, the imagination conceives as rooted flowers,

> "Beneath an old grey oak, as violets, lie."

On the other hand, the scattered rocks, which have not, as such, vitality enough for rest, are gifted with it by the living image; they

> "Lie couched around us like a flock of sheep."

3. Thus, as we saw that Unity demanded for its expression what at first might have seemed its contrary, Variety, so Repose demands for its expression the implied capability of its

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opposite, Energy; and this even in its lower manifestations, in rocks and stones and trees. By comparing the modes in which the mind is disposed to regard the boughs of a fair and vigorous tree, motionless in the summer air, with the effect produced by one of the same boughs hewn square and used for threshold or lintel, the reader will at once perceive the connection of vitality with repose, and the part they both bear in beauty.*

4. But that which in lifeless things ennobles them by seeming to indicate life, ennobles higher creatures by indicating the exaltation of their earthly vitality into a Divine vitality; and raising the life of sense into the life of Faith: faith, whether we receive it in the sense

* (The two preceding paragraphs, 2nd and 3rd, are extremely well thought out, and clearly worded: the succeeding 4th is one of the best in all my books, relating to religious subjects; and of peculiar value at this time, when even the *conceptions* of Faith and Obedience have become impossible to the vulgar heart, in England.)

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of adherence to resolution, obedience to law, regardfulness of promise, in which from all time it has been the test, as the shield, of the true being and life of man; or in the still higher sense of trustfulness in the presence, kindness, and word of God, in which form it has been exhibited under the Christian dispensation. For, whether in one or other form, —whether the faithfulness of men whose path is chosen and portion fixed, in the following and receiving of that path and portion, as in the Thermopylæ camp; or the happier faithfulness of children in the good giving of their Father, and of subjects in the conduct of their King, as in the "Stand still and see the salvation of God" of the Red Sea shore,—there is rest and peacefulness, the "standing still," in both; the quietness of action determined, of spirit unalarmed, of expectation unimpatient: beautiful, even when based only, as of old, on the self-command and self-possession, the

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persistent dignity or the uncalculating love, of the creature ; * but more beautiful yet when the rest is one of humility instead of pride, and the trust no more in the resolution we have taken, but in the hand we hold.

5. Hence I think that there is no desire more intense or more exalted than that which exists in all rightly disciplined minds for the evidences of repose in external signs ; and what I cautiously said respecting infinity, I say fearlessly respecting repose ; that no work of art can be great without it, and that all art

* "The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity
Inward and outward, humble, yet sublime.
The life where hope and memory are as one.
Earth quiet and unchanged ; the human soul
Consistent in self-rule ; and heaven revealed
To meditation, in that quietness."

WORDSWORTH, *Excursion*, book iii.

(I have italicized the beautiful line which describes a perfectly happy life ; and cut out a useless note, which in the old edition introduced irrelevant matter.)

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is great in proportion to the appearance of it.* It is the most unfailing test of beauty, whether of matter or of motion; nothing can be ignoble that possesses it, nothing right that has it not;

* (This is wildly overstated; and the rest of the paragraph is nearly pure nonsense,—yet with a grain of meaning at the bottom, which is worth explanation, and, once explained, contains an apology due to the reader, and a palliation, just to myself, for the extravagance not of this passage only, but of many subsequent ones like it.

When I was first in Rome, in the winter of 1840, my own real art pleasures were only in Turner and Prout: but I desired earnestly to profit by the opportunities round me; and when Mr. George Richmond and Mr. Joseph Severn took me to the Vatican, looked very reverently at whatever I was bid.

Of Raphael, however, I found I could make nothing whatever. The only thing clearly manifest to me in his compositions was, that everybody seemed to be pointing at everybody else, and that nobody, to my notion, was worth pointing at.

But the colossal perplexities and subtle chiaro-oscuro of the Sistine Chapel impressed me, like the sublimity of mountains; the authority of Reynolds, which was at that time conclusive with me, enforced the feeling of which I was already not a little vain, that I could sympathize with

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and in strict proportion to its appearance in the work is the majesty of mind to be inferred in the artificer. Without regard to other qualities, we may look to this for our evidence; and by

the greatest (so he was called by all my friends) of Italian masters. I set myself almost exclusively to the study of him, and long before I had begun writing "Modern Painters," knew every figure and statue by Michael Angelo, either in Rome or Florence, very literally by heart: while I remained in total ignorance of the antecedent religious schools. When, in 1845, the writings of Lord Lindsay led me to these, and I worked for the first time in Santa Maria Novella, and also for the first time read Dante, it seemed to me that the entire virtue and intellectual power of the older schools had been consummated in Dante; and then the three dynasties of Greek, Christian Mystic, and Christian Naturalist, became represented to me by the three men, Phidias, Michael Angelo, and Dante, named in the text; and represented, also, with a power and simplicity unqualified by relative or intermediate knowledge. The physical repose of the statues of the Theseus, and of the Dawn and Twilight, and the spiritual repose of the conceptions of Paradise by Dante and Angelico, impressed me as their distinctive character: and the apparently sudden enthusiasm of the pages I am excusing, was indeed the outcome of the eager emotions of five youthful years.

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the search for this alone we may be led to the rejection of all that is base, and the accepting of all that is good and great, for the paths of wisdom are all peace. We shall see, by this light, three colossal images standing up side by side, looming in their great rest of spirituality above the whole world-horizon;—Phidias, Michael Angelo, and Dante;—and then, separated from their great religious thrones only by less fulness and earnestness of faith, Homer and Shakespeare; and from these we may go down step by step among

Rightly expanded, or even understood as it was meant the paragraph has a considerable measure of subtle truth in it; but as it stands, it is, as I have just confessed, nearly pure nonsense; for although great work is for the most part quiet, there is a great deal of quiet work in the world which is also extremely small, and extremely dull.

The sense in which Homer and Shakespeare are spoken of as separate from the masters of the definitely Christian schools, will be found afterwards developed in my essay on The Mystery of Life. It is curious, now, to myself, to see how early this feeling was in my mind.

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the mighty men of every age, securely and certainly observant of diminished lustre in every appearance of restlessness and effort, until the last trace of true inspiration vanishes in tottering affectation, or tortured insanity. There is no art, no pursuit whatsoever, but its results may be classed by this test alone. Everything of evil is betrayed and winnowed away by it; glitter, confusion, or glare of colour; inconsistency of thought; forced expression; evil choice of subject; redundance of materials, pretence, overcharged decoration, or excessive division of parts; and this in everything. In architecture, in music, in acting, in dancing, in whatsoever art, great or mean, there are yet degrees of greatness or meanness entirely dependent on this single quality of repose.

6. Particular instances are at present needless, and cannot but be inadequate; needless because I suppose that every reader, however

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limited his experience of art, can supply many for himself; and inadequate, because no number of them could illustrate the full extent of the influence of the expression. I believe, however, that by comparing the convulsions of the Laocoon with the calmness of the Elgin Theseus, we may obtain a general idea of the effect of the influence, as shown by its absence in one, and presence in the other, of two works which, as far as artistical merit is concerned, are in some measure parallel; not that I believe, even in this respect, the Laocoon is justifiably comparable with the Theseus. I suppose that no group has exercised so pernicious an influence on art as this; a subject ill chosen, meanly conceived, and unnaturally treated, recommended to imitation by subtleties of execution and accumulation of technical knowledge.*

* I would also have the reader compare with the meagre lines and contemptible tortures of the Laocoon, the awfulness and quietness of M. Angelo's treatment of a subject in most respects similar (the Plague of the Fiery Serpents),

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7. In Christian art, it would be well to compare the feeling of the finer among the

but of which the choice was justified both by the place which the event holds in the typical system he had to arrange, and by the grandeur of the plague itself, in its multitudinous grasp, and its mystical salvation; sources of sublimity entirely absent in the death of the Dardan priest. It is good to see how his gigantic intellect reaches after repose, and truthfully finds it, in the falling hand of the near figure, and in the deathful decline of that whose hands are held up even in their venomed coldness to the cross; and though irrelevant to our present purpose, it is well also to note how the grandeur of this treatment results, not merely from choice, but from the greater knowledge and more faithful rendering of truth. For whatever knowledge of the human frame there may be in the Laocoon, there is certainly none of the habits of serpents. The fixing of the snake's head in the side of the principal figure is as false to nature as it is poor in composition of line. A large serpent never wants to bite, it wants to hold; it seizes therefore always where it can hold best, by the extremities, or throat; it seizes once and for ever, and that before it coils; following up the seizure with a cast of its body round the victim, as invisibly swift as the twist of a whip-lash round any hard object it may strike: and then it holds fast, never moving the jaws or the body; if the prey has any power of struggling left, it throws round

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altar tombs of the middle ages, with any monumental works after Michael Angelo; per-

another coil, without quitting the hold with the jaws. If Laocoon had had to do with real serpents, instead of pieces of tape with heads to them, he would have been held still, and not allowed to throw his arms or legs about. It is most instructive to observe the accuracy of Michael Angelo, in the rendering of these circumstances; the binding of the arms to the body, and the knotting of the whole mass of agony together, until we hear the crashing of the bones beneath the grisly sliding of the engine folds. Note also in all the figures the expression of another circumstance; the torpor and cold numbness of the limbs induced by the serpent venom, which, though justifiably overlooked by the sculptor of the Laocoon, as well as by Virgil, in consideration of the rapidity of the death by crushing, adds infinitely to the power of the Florentine's conception, and would have been better hinted by Virgil, than that sickening distribution of venom on the garlands. In fact, Virgil has missed both of truth and impressiveness every way: the "morsu depascitur" is unnatural butchery, the "perfusus veneno" gratuitous foulness, the "clamores horrendos" impossible degradation. Compare carefully the remarks on this statue in Sir Charles Bell's Essay on Expression (third edition, p. 162), where he has most wisely and incontrovertibly deprived the statue of all claim to expression of energy and fortitude of mind, and shown

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haps more especially with works of Roubililac or Canova.

In the Cathedral of Lucca, near the entrance-door of the north transept, there is a monument by Jacopo della Quercia to Ilaria di Caretto, the wife of Paolo Guinigi. I name

its common and coarse intent of mere bodily exertion and agony; while he has confirmed Payne Knight's just condemnation of the passage in Virgil. Observe, however, that no fault is to be found with the uniting of the poisonous and crushing powers in the serpents; this is, both in Virgil and Michael Angelo, a healthy operation of the imagination, since though those two powers are not, I believe, united in any known serpent, yet in the essence or idea of serpent they are; nor is there anything contradictory in them or incapable of perfect unity. But in Virgil it is unhealthy operation of the imagination which destroys the verity both of the venom and the crushing, by attributing impossible concomitants to both; by supposing in the poison an impossible quantity uselessly directed, and leaving the victim capability of crying out, under the action of the coils.

If the reader wishes to see the opposite view of subject, let him compare Winckelmann; and Schiller, Letters on Æsthetic Culture.

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it not as more beautiful or perfect than other examples of the same period;* but as furnishing an instance of the exact and right mean between the rigidity and rudeness of the earlier monumental effigies, and the morbid imitation of life, sleep, or death, of which the fashion has taken place in modern times.† She is lying on a simple couch with a hound at her feet; not on the side, but with the head laid straight and simply on the hard pillow, in which, let it be observed, there is no effort at deceptive imitation of pressure. It is understood as a pillow, but not mistaken for one.

* (It is forty years since I first saw it—and I have never found its like. Pisa, 5th November, 1882.)

† Whenever, in monumental work, the sculptor reaches a deceptive appearance of life or death, or of concomitant details, he has gone too far. The statue should be felt to be a statue, not look like a dead or sleeping body; it should not convey the impression of a corpse, nor of sick and outwearied flesh, but it should be the marble *image* of death or weariness. So the concomitants should be distinctly marble, severe and monumental in their lines; not shroud,

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The hair is bound in a flat braid over the fair brow,* the sweet and arched eyes are closed, the tenderness of the loving lips is set and quiet; there is that about them which forbids breath; something which is not death nor sleep, but the pure image of both. The hands are not lifted in prayer, neither folded, but the arms are laid at length upon the body, and the hands cross as they fall. The feet are hidden

not bedclothes, not actual armour nor brocade; not a real soft pillow, not a downright hard-stuffed mattress; but the mere type and suggestion of these, and the ruder, often the nobler. Not that they are to be unnatural; such lines as are given should be true, and clear of the hardness and mannered rigidity of the strictly Gothic types; but lines so few and grand as to appeal to the imagination only, and always to stop short of realization. A monument by a modern Italian sculptor has been lately placed in one of the side chapels of Santa Croce, forcible as portraiture, and delicately finished, but looking as if the person had been restless all night, and the artist admitted to a faithful study of the disturbed bed-clothes in the morning.

* (The braiding is not flat, but in tresses, of which the lightest escape, and fall free.)

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by the drapery, and the forms of the limbs concealed, but not their tenderness.

If any of us, after staying for a time beside this tomb, could see, through his tears, one of the vain and unkind encumbrances of the grave, which in these hollow and heartless days, feigned sorrow builds to foolish pride, he would, I believe, receive such a lesson of love as no coldness could refuse, no fatuity forget, and no insolence disobey.

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CHAPTER IV.

Of Symmetry, or the Type of Divine Justice.

1. WE shall not be long detained by the consideration of this, the fourth constituent of beauty, as its nature is universally felt and understood. In all perfectly beautiful objects, there is found the opposition of one part to another, and a reciprocal balance, in animals, commonly between opposite sides; (note the disagreeableness occasioned by the exception in flat-fish, having the eyes on one side of the head): while in vegetables the opposition is less distinct, as in the boughs on opposite sides of trees, and the leaves and sprays on each side of the boughs; and in dead matter less perfect still, often amounting

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only to a certain tendency towards a balance, as in the opposite sides of valleys, and alternate windings of streams.

2. In things in which perfect symmetry is from their nature impossible or improper, a balance must be at least in some measure expressed before they can be beheld with pleasure. Hence the necessity of what artists require as opposing lines or masses in composition, the propriety of which, as well as their value, depends chiefly on their inartificial and natural invention. Absolute equality is not required, still less absolute similarity; a mass of subdued colour may be balanced by a point of a powerful one, and a long and latent line overpowered by a short and conspicuous one.

3. The only error against which it is necessary to guard the reader, with respect to symmetry, is, the confounding of it with proportion, though it seems strange that the two terms could ever have been used as

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synonymous. Symmetry is the *opposition* of *equal* quantities to each other; proportion, the *connection* of *unequal* quantities with each other. The property of a tree in sending out equal boughs on opposite sides is symmetrical; its sending out shorter and smaller towards the top, proportional. In the human face, its balance of opposite sides is symmetry; its division upwards, proportion.

4. Whether the agreeableness of symmetry be in any way referable to its expression of the Aristotelian ἰσότης, that is to say, of abstract justice, I leave the reader to determine: I only assert respecting it, that it is necessary to the dignity of every form, and that by the removal of it we shall render the other elements of beauty comparatively ineffectual: though, on the other hand, it is to be observed that it is rather a mode of arrangement of qualities than a quality itself; and hence symmetry has little power over the mind, unless

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all the other constituents of beauty be found together with it. A form may be symmetrical and ugly, as many Elizabethan ornaments, and yet not so ugly as it would have been if unsymmetrical, but bettered always by increasing degrees of symmetry: as in star figures, wherein there is a circular symmetry of many like members, whence their frequent use for the plan and ground of ornamental designs. So also it is observable that foliage in which the leaves are concentrically grouped, as in the chestnuts, and many shrubs, rhododendrons, for instance, is far nobler in its effects than any other, so that the sweet chestnut most fondly and frequently occurs in the landscape of Tintoret and Titian, (beside which all other landscape grandeur vanishes.)* And even in the meanest things the rule holds, as in the kaleidoscope, wherein agreeableness is given

* (Nonsense, again; from believing the talk about Titian's landscape too easily).

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to forms altogether accidental, merely by their repetition and reciprocal opposition. Which orderly balance and arrangement are essential to the perfect operation of the more earnest and solemn qualities of the Beautiful, as being heavenly in their nature, and contrary to the violence and disorganization of sin; so that the seeking of them, and submission to them, are characteristic of minds that have been subjected to high moral discipline, and constant in all the great religious painters, to the degree of being an offence and a scorn to men of less tuned and tranquil feeling. Equal ranks of saints are placed on each side of the picture; if there be a kneeling figure on one side, there is a corresponding one on the other; the attendant angels beneath and above are arranged in like order; and the balance is preserved even in actions necessitating variety of grouping, as always by Giotto; and by Ghirlandajo in the intro-

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duction of his chorus-like side figures; and by Tintoret most eminently in his noblest work, the Crucifixion, where not only the grouping, but the arrangement of light, is absolutely symmetrical. Where there is no symmetry, the effects of passion and violence are increased, and many very sublime pictures derive their sublimity from the want of it, but they lose proportionally in the diviner quality of beauty. In landscape the same sense of symmetry is preserved, as we shall presently see, even to artificialness, by the greatest men; and it is one of the principal faults in the landscapes of the present day, that the symmetry of nature is sacrificed to irregular picturesqueness. Of this, however, hereafter.

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CHAPTER V.

Of Purity, or the Type of Divine Energy.

1. IT may at first appear strange that I have not, in my enumeration of the types of Divine attributes, included that which is certainly the most visible and evident of all, as well as the most distinctly expressed in Scripture; "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all." But I could not logically class the presence of an actual substance or motion with mere conditions and modes of being; neither could I logically separate from any of these, that which is evidently necessary to the perception of all. And it is also to be observed, that, though the love of light is more instinctive in the human heart than any other of the desires connected with beauty, we can

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hardly separate its agreeableness, in its own nature, from the sense of its necessity and value for the purposes of life; neither the abstract painfulness of darkness from the sense of danger and powerlessness connected with it. And note also that it is not *all* light, but light possessing the universal qualities of beauty, diffused or infinite rather than in points; tranquil, not startling and variable; pure, not sullied or oppressed; which is indeed pleasant and perfectly typical of the Divine nature.

2. Observe, however, that there is one quality, the idea of which has been just introduced in connection with light, which might have escaped us in the consideration of mere matter, namely Purity: and yet I think that the original notion of this quality is altogether material, and has only been attributed to colour when such colour is suggestive of the condition of matter from which we originally received the idea. For I see not in

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the abstract how one colour should be considered *purer* than another, except as more or less compounded: whereas there is certainly a sense of purity or impurity in the most compound and neutral colours, as well as in the simplest; a quality difficult to define, and which the reader will probably be surprised by my calling the type of Energy, with which it has certainly little traceable connection in the mind.

3. I believe, however, if we carefully analyse the nature of our ideas of impurity in general, we shall find them refer especially to conditions of matter in which its various elements are placed in a relation incapable of healthy or proper operation; and most distinctly to conditions in which the negation of vital or energetic action is most evident; as in corruption and decay of all kinds, wherein particles which once, by their operation on each other, produced a living and energetic whole, are

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reduced to a condition of perfect passiveness, in which they are seized upon and appropriated, one by one, piecemeal, by whatever has need of them, without any power of resistance or energy of their own. And thus there is a peculiar painfulness attached to any associations of inorganic with organic matter, such as appear to involve the inactivity and feebleness of the latter; so that things which are not felt to be foul in their own nature become so in association with things of greater inherent energy: as dust or earth, which in a mass excites no painful sensation, excites a most disagreeable one when strewing or staining an animal's skin; because it implies a decline and deadening of the vital and healthy power of the skin.

4. But all reasoning about this impression is rendered difficult, because the ocular sense of impurity connected with corruption is enhanced by the offending of other senses

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and by the grief and horror of it in its own nature, as the special punishment and evidence of sin: and on the other hand, the ocular delight in purity is mingled, as I before observed, with the love of the mere element of light, as a type of wisdom and of truth; whence it seems to me that we admire the transparency of bodies; though probably it is still rather owing to our sense of more perfect order and arrangement of particles, and not to our love of light, that we look upon a piece of rock crystal as purer than a piece of marble, and on the marble as purer than a piece of chalk.

5. And let it be observed, also, that the most lovely objects in nature are only partially transparent. I suppose the utmost possible sense of beauty is conveyed by a feebly translucent, smooth, but not lustrous surface of white, and pale warm red, subdued by the most pure and delicate greys, as in the

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finer portions of the human frame,—in wreaths of snow,—and in white plumage under rose light, so Viola of Olivia in Twelfth Night, and Homer of Atrides wounded.* And I think that transparency and lustre, both beautiful in themselves, are incompatible with the highest beauty; because they destroy form, on the

* So Spenser of Shamefacedness, an exquisite piece of glowing colour, and the making of the image of Florimell:

"The substance whereof she the body made
Was purest snow, in massy mould congealed,
Which she had gathered in a shady glade
Of the Riphæan hills.
The same she tempered with fine mercury,
And mingled them with perfect vermily."

With Una he perhaps overdoes the white a little. She is two degrees of comparison above snow. Compare his questioning in the Hymn to Beauty, about "that mixture made of colours fair:"

"Hath white and red in it such wondrous power
That it can pierce through the eyes into the heart?"

(I have cut away some useless prolixities in the above note, and would pray the reader to take Spenser's Hymn for his teacher, and ask to be taught no more.)

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full perception of which more of the divinely typical character of the object depends than upon its colour. Hence in the beauty of snow and of flesh, so much translucency is allowed as is consistent with the full explanation of the forms; while we are suffered to receive more intense impressions of light and transparency from other objects, which nevertheless, owing to their necessarily unperceived form, are not perfectly nor affectingly beautiful. A fair forehead outshines its diamond diadem. The sparkle of the cascade withdraws not our eyes from the snowy summits in their evening silence.

6. It may seem strange to many readers that I have not spoken of purity in that sense in which it is most frequently used, as a type of sinlessness. I do not deny that the frequent metaphorical use of it in Scripture may have, and ought to have, much influence on the sympathies with which we regard it; and that

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probably the immediate agreeableness of it to most minds arises far more from this source* than from that to which I have chosen to attribute it. But, in the first place, if it be indeed in the signs of Divine and not of human attributes that beauty consists, I see not how the idea of sin can be formed with respect to the Deity; for it is an idea of a relation borne by us to Him, and not in any way to be attached to His abstract nature: while the Love, Mercifulness, and Justice of God I have supposed to be symbolized by other qualities of beauty, and I cannot trace any rational connection between them and the idea of Spotlessness in matter; nor between this idea and any of the virtues which make up the righteousness of man, except perhaps those

* (I cannot but wonder more and more at the obstinacy of the public in calling these early books my best writing. The hissing of these two lines, after 'immediate,' might be made a warning example in public schools.)

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of truth and openness, which have been above spoken of as more expressed by the transparency than the mere purity of matter. So that I conceive the use of the terms purity, spotlessness, etc., in moral subjects, to be merely metaphorical; and that it is rather that we illustrate these virtues by the desireableness of material purity than that we desire material purity because it is illustrative of these virtues.*

7. I repeat, then, that the only idea, which I think can be legitimately connected with purity of matter, is this of vital and energetic connection among its particles; as that of foulness is essentially connected with dissolution and death. Thus the purity of the rock, contrasted with the foulness of dust or mould,

* (This uncertain and unsatisfactory paragraph enters on subjects far out of its grasp, and misses the things close at hand, which needed chief consideration. See final note to this chapter, p. 203.)

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is expressed by the epithet "living," very singularly given to rock, in almost all languages (singularly, because life is almost the last attribute one would ascribe to stone, but for this visible energy and connection of its particles); and so to flowing water, opposed to stagnant. And I do not think that, however pure a powder or dust may be, the idea of beauty is ever connected with it; for it is not the mere purity, but the *active* condition of the substance which is desired;* so that as soon as it shoots into crystals, or gathers into efflorescence, a sensation of active or real purity is received, which was not felt in the calcined caput mortuum.

8. And again, in colour, I imagine that the quality which we term purity is dependent on the full energizing of the rays that compose

* (Well observed, but not conclusively. Snow is a powder, practically, in hard frost; and it is perhaps easier to attach the idea of purity to flour than to bread.)

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it; of which if in compound hues any are overpowered and killed by the rest, so as to be of no value nor operation, foulness is the consequence; while so long as all act together, whether side by side, or from pigments seen one through the other, so that all the colouring matter employed may come into play in the harmony desired, and none be quenched nor killed, purity results.* And so in all cases I suppose that pureness is made to us desirable, because expressive of that constant presence and energizing of the Deity by which all things live and move, and have their being; and that foulness is painful as the accompaniment of disorder and decay, and always indicative of the withdrawal of Divine support. And the practical analogies of life, the invari-

* (Again well said; and the statement should have been farther enforced. The essential difference between painting and daubing is that a *painter* lays not a grain more colour than is needed.)

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able connection of outward foulness with mental sloth and degradation, as well as with bodily lethargy and disease, together with the contrary indications of freshness and purity belonging to every healthy and active organic frame, (singularly seen in the effort of the young leaves when first their inward energy prevails over the earth, pierces its corruption, and shakes its dust away from their own white purity of life), all these circumstances strengthen the instinct by associations countless and irresistible.

9. And then, finally, with the idea of purity comes that of spirituality; for the essential characteristic of matter in its inertia, whence, by adding to its purity of energy, we may in some measure spiritualize even matter itself. Thus, in the Apocalyptic descriptions, it is the purity of every substance that fits it for its place in heaven; the river of the water of life, that proceeds out of the throne of the

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Lamb, is clear as crystal, and the pavement of the city is pure gold "like unto clear glass."*

* I have not spoken here of any of the associations connected with warmth or coolness of colour; they are partly connected with Vital beauty, and partly with impressions of the sublime, the discussion of which is foreign to the present subject: purity, however, it is which gives beauty to both; for neither warm nor cool colour can be beautiful, if impure.

Neither have I spoken of any questions relating to melodies of colour; a subject of separate science, whose general principle has been already stated in the 2nd chapter of this section, respecting unity of Sequence. Those qualities only are here noted which give absolute beauty, whether to separate colour, or to melodies of it: for all melodies (of it) are not beautiful, but only those which are expressive of certain pleasant or solemn emotions; the rest are startling, or curious, or cheerful, or exciting, or sublime; but not beautiful; and so in music. And all questions relating to this grandeur, cheerfulness, or other characteristic impressions of colour, must be considered under the head of Ideas of Relation.

(I used thus to slip things out of my way from one chapter to another, partly with a notion of being systematic, partly because I was tired; until at last they often

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slipped out of my head altogether. Thus in the sixth paragraph, the quite primary difficulty of saying whether *spots* are pretty or ugly ;—whether a fallow-deer is the worse for dappling, or a mackerel for mottling, or a foxglove for speckling, is wholly lost sight of ; and, throughout the chapter, the question why we like gold-yellow better than brass-yellow—or rose-colour better than brown—or in general any colour better than any other. I believe there is something said on these points farther on in the book : if not, I'll say something about them where I think it will be useful ; only in the meantime, observe that we like gold because it is of a pretty and permanent yellow ; and not the yellow colour because it is like gold. I overwork the epithet 'golden' in most of my own descriptions ; not because I like guineas, but because I like buttercups and broom.)

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CHAPTER VI.

Of Moderation, or the Type of Government by Law.

1. OF objects which, in respect of the qualities hitherto considered, appear to have equal claims to regard, we find, nevertheless, that certain are preferred to others in consequence of an attractive power, usually expressed by the terms 'chasteness,' 'refinement,' or 'elegance:' and it appears also that things which in other respects have little in them of natural beauty, and are of forms altogether simple, and adapted to simple uses, are capable of much distinction and desirableness in consequence of these qualities only. It is of importance to discover the real nature of the ideas thus expressed.

2. Something of the peculiar meaning of

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the words is referable to the authority of fashion and the exclusiveness of pride; owing to which that which is the mode of a particular time is submissively esteemed; and that which by its costliness or its rarity is of difficult attainment, or in any way appears to have been chosen as the best of many things (which is the original sense of the words elegant and exquisite), is esteemed for the witness it bears to the dignity of the chooser: but neither of these ideas is in any way connected with constant beauty; neither do they account for that agreeableness of colour and form which is especially termed chasteness, and which it would seem to be a characteristic of rightly trained minds in all things to prefer, and of common minds to reject.

3. There is however another character of artificial productions to which these terms have partial reference, which it is of some importance to note; that of finish, exactness,

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or refinement: which are commonly desired in the works of men, owing both to their difficulty of accomplishment and consequent expression of care and power, (compare chapter on Ideas of Power, Part I. Sec. I.), and from their greater resemblance to the working of God, whose "absolute exactness," says Hooker, "all things imitate, by tending to that which is most exquisite in every particular." And there is not a greater sign of the imperfection of general taste, than its capability of contentment with forms and things which, professing completion, are yet not exact nor complete; as in the vulgar with wax and clay and china figures, and in bad sculptors with an unfinished and clay-like modelling of surface, and curves and angles of no precision or delicacy; and in general, in all common and unthinking persons with an imperfect rendering of that which might be pure and fine: as churchwardens are content to lose the sharp lines of stone

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carving under clogging obliterations of white-wash; and as the modern Italians scrape away and polish white all the sharpness and glory of the carvings on their old churches, as most miserably and pitifully on St. Mark's at Venice, and the Baptisteries of Pistoja and Pisa,* and many others.

4. So also the delight of vulgar painters in coarse and slurred painting, merely for the sake of its coarseness;† as of Spagnoletto, Salvator,

* (When I came here first, in 1845, the pinnacles of the Baptistery were lying round it in shattered heaps. I have since witnessed the destruction of the Spina chapel,—see 'Fors Clavigera' of 1874; and yesterday found the whole façade of one of the few remaining uninjured churches, plastered white with election bills.—Pisa, Nov. 7th, 1882.)

† It is to be carefully noted that when rude execution is evidently not the result of imperfect feeling and desire, (as in these men above named it is), but either of impatient thought, which there was necessity to note swiftly, or agitated thought, which it was well to note with a certain wildness of manner, as pre-eminently and in both kinds the case with Tintoret, and in lower and more degraded modes, with Rubens, and generally in the sketches and first

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or Murillo, opposed to the divine finish which the greatest and mightiest of men disdained not, but rather wrought out with painfulness and life-spending; as Leonardo and Michael Angelo (for the latter, however many things he left unfinished, did finish, if at all, with a refinement that the eye cannot follow, but the feeling only, as in the Pietà of Genoa); and

thoughts of great masters, there is received a very noble pleasure, connected both with ideas of power, (compare again Part I. Sec. II. Chap. I.) and with certain actions of the imagination of which we shall speak presently. But this pleasure is not received from the beauty of the work, for nothing can be perfectly beautiful unless complete, but from its simplicity and sufficiency to its immediate purpose; where the purpose is not of beauty at all, as often in things rough hewn;—pre-eminently, for instance, in the stones of the foundations of the Pitti and Strozzi Palaces, whose noble rudèness is to be opposed both to the useless polish, and the barbarous rustications, of modern times. Although this instance is not to be received without exception, for the majesty of these rocky buildings depends also in some measure upon the real beauty and finish of the natural curvilinear fractures opposed to the coarseness of human chiselling. And again, as respects works of higher

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Perugino always, even to the gilding of single hairs among his angel tresses; and the young Raffaelle, when he was heaven-taught; and Angelico, and Pinturicchio, and John Bellini, and all other such serious and loving men. Only it is to be observed that this finish is not a part nor constituent of beauty, but the full and ultimate rendering of it; so that it is

art, the pleasure of their hasty or imperfect execution is not indicative of their beauty, but of their majesty, fulness of thought, and vastness of power. Shade is only beautiful when it magnifies and sets forth the forms of fair things; so negligence is only noble when it is, as Fuseli hath it, "the shadow of energy." Which that it may be, secure the substance and the shade will follow; but let the artist beware of stealing the manner of giant intellects when he has not their intention; and of assuming large modes of treatment when he has little thoughts to treat. There is wide difference between *indolent* impatience of labour and *intellectual* impatience of delay; large difference between leaving things unfinished because we have *more to do*, and because we are satisfied with what we *have done*. Tintoret, who prayed hard, and hardly obtained, that he might be permitted, the charge of his colours only being borne, to paint a newly built house from base to battle-

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an idea only connected with the works of men, for all the works of the Deity are finished with the same, that is, infinite, care and completion: and so what degrees of beauty exist among them can in no way be dependent upon this source, inasmuch as there are between them no degrees of care. And therefore, as there certainly is admitted a difference of degree in what we call chasteness, even in Divine work (compare the hollyhock or the sunflower with the vale lily), we must seek for it some other explanation and source than this.

5. And if, bringing down our ideas of it from complicated objects to simple lines and colours, we analyse and regard them carefully. I think we shall be able to trace them to an

ment, was not one to shun labour; it is the pouring in upon him of glorious thoughts, in inexpressible multitude, that his sweeping hand follows so fast. It is as easy to know the slightness of earnest haste from the slightness of blunt feeling, indolence, or affectation, as it is to know the dust of a race, from the dust of dissolution.

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under-current of constantly agreeable feeling, excited by the appearance in material things of a self-restrained liberty; that is to say, by the image of that acting of God with regard to all His creation, wherein, though free to operate in whatever arbitrary, sudden, violent, or inconstant ways He will, He yet, if we may reverently so speak, restrains in Himself this His omnipotent liberty, and works always in consistent modes, called by us, laws. And this restraint or moderation (according to the words of Hooker, "that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the form and measure of working, the same we term a Law,") is in the Deity not restraint, such as it is said of creatures, but, as again says Hooker, "the very being of God is a law to His working," so that every appearance of painfulness or want of power and freedom in material things is wrong and ugly; for the right restraint,

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the image of Divine operation, is, both in them, and in (the spirit of)* men, a willing and not painful stopping short of the utmost degree to which their power might reach, and the appearance of fettering or confinement is the cause of ugliness in the one, as the slightest painfulness or effort in restraint is a sign of sin in the other.

6. I have put this attribute of beauty last, because I consider it the girdle and safeguard of all the rest, and in this respect the most essential of all; for it is possible that a certain degree of beauty may be attained even in the absence of one of its other constituents, as sometimes in some measure without

* (I am obliged to insert these three words, to show what I meant. For the text, as it stood, implied that men were immaterial. Also it should have been observed that the ideas of liberty and restraint can only be attached to things capable of different kinds of energy or motion;—as to a stream and a canal, a tree wild or pruned, and the like.)

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symmetry or without unity. But the least appearance of violence or extravagance, of the want of moderation and restraint, is, I think, destructive of all beauty whatsoever in everything, colour, form, motion, language, or thought; giving rise to that which in colour we call glaring, in form inelegant, in motion ungraceful, in language coarse, in thought, undisciplined, in all unchastened; which qualities are in everything most painful, because the signs of disobedient and irregular operation.

7. And herein we at last find the reason of that which has been so often noted respecting the subtlety and almost invisibility of natural curves and colours, and why it is that we look on those lines as least beautiful which fall into wide and far license of curvature, and as most beautiful which approach nearest (so that the curvilinear character be distinctly asserted) to the govern-

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ment of the right line; as in the pure and severe curves of the draperies of the religious painters. And thus in colour it is not red, but rose colour, which is most beautiful; neither such actual green as we find in summer foliage partly, and in our painting of it constantly, but such grey green as that into which nature modifies her distant tints, or such pale green and uncertain as we see in sunset sky, and in the clefts of the glacier and the chrysoprase, and the sea-foam; and so of all colours: not that they may not sometimes be deep and full, but that there is a solemn moderation even in their very fulness, and a holy reference, beyond and out of their own nature, to great harmonies by which they are governed, and in obedience to which is their glory. Whereof the ignorance is shown in all evil colourists by the violence and positiveness of their hues, and by dulness and discordance consequent; for the very brilliancy

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and real power of all colour is dependent on the chastening of it, as of a voice on its gentleness, and as of action on its calmness, and as all moral vigour on self-command.

8. And therefore—as that virtue which men last, and with most difficulty, attain unto,* and which many attain not at all, and yet that which is essential to the conduct and almost to the being of all other virtues; since neither imagination, nor invention, nor industry, nor sensibility, nor energy, nor any other good having, is of full avail without this of self-command; whereby works truly masculine and mighty are produced, and by the signs of which they are separated from that lower host of things brilliant, magnificent, and redundant; and farther yet, from that of

* (I would fain strike out the 'unto,' and otherwise 'moderate' the whole passage—but will trust the reader's patience with it, rather than my own vexation. See the terminal note.)

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the loose, the lawless, the exaggerated, the insolent, and the profane;—I would have the necessity of it foremost among all our inculcating, and the name of it largest among all our inscribing, in so far that, over the doors of every school of Art, I would have* this one word, relieved out in deep letters of pure gold,—Moderation.

* (How the public ever pardoned as they did, the steady self-confidence and general 'I would have' (it so) of this book, is extremely difficult for me now to conceive: and yet they were right; for at the root of this simplicity of egotism, there was a natural consciousness of my real power of discrimination which I no more cared to assert than a good dog his power of scent; and on the other hand,—and *this* I wish I *had* more distinctly asserted,—there was in me as firmly rooted conviction of my own littleness, or nothingness, in relation to the men whom I loved and praised.)

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CHAPTER VII.

General Inferences respecting Typical Beauty.

(Before attempting these generalizations of the subject, I ought to have given one or two simple examples of the practical application of the foregoing principles,—such as I here promise in the succeeding volume: and to have shown how, for instance, a wild rose is pretty because it has concentric petals,—because each petal is bounded by varying curves,—because these curves are dual, and symmetrically opposed,—because the five petals are bent into the form of a cup which gives them gradated depth of shade,—because the shade as well as the light is coloured with crimson and gold,—and because both the gold and crimson are used in their most subtle degrees and tints. I will not, however, now alter or interrupt the course of the old essay; but must at least make the reader clearly aware, that hitherto, the circumstances said to be productive of beauty have been simply those which please the eye, wherever they occur; that blue is thought of as an agreeable colour, when it is a pure blue, whether in a butterfly's wing, or in the sky; and a consistently varied curve is thought of as a pleasant line, whether it limits a mountain, a wave, or a limb. And chiefly I must reiterate,

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with reference to modern narrownesses or meannesses of thought, that the pleasure of the eye is never confused with the blind and temporary instincts of the blood; and that, briefly, and always, a girl is praised because she is like a rose,—not a rose because it is like a girl.)

1. I HAVE now enumerated and, in some measure, explained those characteristics of *mere* matter by which I conceive it becomes agreeable to the Theoretic faculty, under whatever form, dead, organized, or animated, it may present itself. It will be our task in the succeeding volume to examine, and illustrate by examples, the mode in which these characteristics appear in every division of creation, in stones, mountains, waves, clouds, and all organic bodies; beginning with vegetables, and then taking instances in the range of animals, from the mollusc * to man;

* (This was indeed the original plan of the book,—formed, the reader will please to observe, in 1845. I reflected upon it for fifteen years,—and then gave it up. In another fifteen years the scientific world professed itself to

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examining how one animal form is nobler than another, by the more manifest presence of these attributes; and chiefly endeavouring to show how much there is of admirable and lovely, even in what is commonly despised. At present I have only to mark the conclusions at which we have as yet arrived respecting the rank of the Theoretic faculty, and then to pursue the inquiry farther into the nature of vital beauty.

As I before said, I pretend not to have enumerated all the sources of material beauty, nor the analogies connected with them: it is probable that others may occur to many readers, or to myself as I proceed into more particular inquiry; but I am not careful to collect all evidence within reach on the subject.

have discovered that the Mollusc was the Father of Man; and the comparison of their modes of beauty became invidious: nevertheless, it is possible I may have a word or two to say, on the plan of the old book yet.)

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I desire only to assert and prove *some* certain principles; and by means of these to show something of the relations which the material works of God bear to the human mind,—leaving the subject to be fully pursued, as it only can be, by the ardour and affection of those whom it may interest.

2. The characters above enumerated are not to be considered as stamped upon matter for our teaching or enjoyment only, but as the *necessary perfection* of God's working, and the inevitable stamp of His image on what He creates. For it would be inconsistent with His Infinite perfection to work imperfectly in any place, or in any matter; wherefore we do not find that flowers, and fair trees, and kindly skies, are given only where man may see them and be fed by them; but the Spirit of God works everywhere alike, where there is no eye to see, covering all lonely places with an equal glory; using the same pencil and

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outpouring the same splendour, in the caves of the waters where the sea snakes swim, and in the desert where the satyrs dance, among the fir trees of the stork, and the rocks of the conies, as among those higher creatures whom He has made capable witnesses of His working.

3. Nevertheless, I think that the admission of different degrees of this glory and image of Himself upon creation, has the look of something meant especially for us; for although, in pursuance of the appointed system of Government by universal laws, these same degrees exist where we cannot witness them, yet the existence of degrees at all seems at first unlikely in Divine work; and I cannot see reason for it unless that palpable one of increasing in us the understanding of the sacred characters by showing us the results of their comparative absence. For I know not that if all things had been equally beautiful, we

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could have received the idea of beauty at all; or if we had, certainly it had become a matter of indifference to us, and of little thought; whereas, through the beneficent ordaining of degrees in its manifestation, the hearts of men are stirred by its occasional occurrence in its noblest form, and all their energies are awakened in the pursuit of it, and endeavour to arrest it or recreate it, for themselves.

4. But whatever doubt there may be respecting the exact amount of modification of created things admitted with reference to us, there can be none respecting the dignity of that faculty by which we receive the mysterious evidence of their divine origin. The fact of our deriving constant pleasure from whatever is a type or semblance of divine attributes, and from nothing but that which is so, is the most glorious of all that can be demonstrated of human nature; it not only sets a great gulf of specific separation between

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us and the lower animals, but it seems a promise of a communion ultimately deep, close, and conscious, with the Being whose darkened manifestations we here feebly and unthinkingly delight in. Probably to every higher order of intelligence more of His image becomes palpable in all around them, and the glorified spirits and the angels have perceptions as much more full and rapturous than ours, as ours than those of beasts and creeping things. And receiving it, as we must, for a universal axiom that "no natural desire can be entirely frustrate," and seeing that these desires are indeed so unfailing in us that they have escaped not the reasoners of any time, but were held divine of old, and in even heathen countries,* may we not see in these visionary pleasures, lightly as we too often regard them, cause for thankfulness,

* Ἡ δὲ τελεία εὐδαιμονία θεωρητική τίς ἐστιν ἐνέργεια. . . . . τοῖς μὲν γὰρ θεοῖς ἅπας ὁ βίος μακάριος, τοῖς δ' ἀνθρώποις, ἐφ

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ground for hope, anchor for faith, more than in all the other manifold gifts and guidances, wherewith God crowns the years, and hedges the paths of Men?

ὅσον ὁμοίωμά τι τῆς τοιαύτης ἐνεργείας ὑπάρχει· τῶν δ' ἄλλων ζῴων οὐδὲν εὐδαιμονεῖ, ἐπειδὴ οὐδαμῇ κοινωνεῖ θεωρίας.—Arist. Eth. lib. 10.

(It seems to me now amazing that I acknowledge no indebtedness to this passage and its context, which seem, looking from this distance of years, to have suggested the whole idea of my own essay. But my impression is that I simply did not understand them on first reading the Ethics, and only after working the matter out from my own Evangelical points of view; saw with surprise that the persons whom I had been in the habit of calling 'Heathen' knew as much before. The sentence will now be found translated and illustrated in the Preface to this volume.)

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SECTION III.

OF VITAL BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.

Of Vital Beauty; I. Relative.

1. I PROCEED more particularly to examine the nature of that second kind of Beauty of which I spoke in the third chapter, as consisting in "the appearance of felicitous fulfilment of function in living things."

I have already noticed the example of very pure and high typical beauty which is to be found in the lines and gradations of unsullied snow: if, passing to the edge of a sheet of it, upon the Lower Alps, early in May, we find, as we are nearly sure to find, two or three little round openings pierced in it, and through these emergent, a slender, pensive, fragile

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flower;* whose small, dark, purple-fringed bell hangs down and shudders over the icy cleft that it has cloven, as if partly wondering at its own recent grave, and partly dying of very fatigue after its hard-won victory; we shall be, or we ought to be, moved by a totally different impression of loveliness from that which we receive among the dead ice and the idle clouds. There is now uttered to us a call for sympathy, now offered to us an image of moral purpose and achievement, which, however unconscious or senseless the creature may indeed be that so seems to call, cannot be heard without affection, nor contemplated without worship, by any of us whose heart is rightly tuned, or whose mind is clearly and surely sighted.

Throughout the whole of the organic creation, every being in a perfect state exhibits certain appearances or evidences of happiness; and is

* Soldanella alpina.

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in its nature, its desires, its modes of nourishment, habitation, and death, illustrative or expressive of certain moral dispositions or principles. Now, first, in the keenness of the sympathy which we feel in the happiness, real or apparent, of all organic beings; and which, as we shall presently see, invariably prompts us, from the joy we have in it, *to look upon those as most lovely which are most happy:** and secondly, in the justness of the moral sense which rightly reads the lesson they are all intended to teach, and classes them in orders of worthiness and beauty according to the rank and nature of that lesson, whether it be of warning or example, in those that wallow or in those that soar;—in our right accepting and reading of all this, consists, I say, the ultimately perfect condition of that noble Theoretic

* (I have italicized this important sentence, on the truth of which far more depends than this poor book brings out of it.)

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faculty, whose place in the system of our nature I have already partly vindicated with respect to typical, but which can only fully be established with respect to vital, beauty.

2. Its first perfection, therefore, relating to Vital Beauty, is the kindness and unselfish fulness of heart, which receives the utmost amount of pleasure from the happiness of all things. Of which in high degree the heart of man is incapable; neither what intense enjoyment the angels may have in all that they see of things that move and live, and in the part they take in the shedding of God's kindness upon them, can we know or conceive: only in proportion as we draw near to God, and are made in measure like unto Him, can we increase this our possession of Charity, of which the entire essence is in God only. But even the ordinary exercise of this faculty implies a condition of the whole moral being in some measure right and healthy, and to

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the entire exercise of it there is necessary the entire perfection of the Christian character; for he who loves not God, nor his brother, cannot love the grass beneath his feet,* and the creatures which live not for his uses, filling those spaces in the universe which he needs not; while on the other hand, none can love God, nor his human brother, without loving all things which his Father loves; nor without looking upon them, every one, as in that respect his brethren also, and perhaps worthier than he, if, in the under concords they have to fill, their part is touched more truly. It is good to read of that kindness and

* (Untrue, I am sorry to say, in both clauses of the sentence. It is very possible to love grasses and ferns without loving God, and much too possible to be religious without loving either fields or beasts. The simple statement that the degree of beauty we can see, in visible things, depends on the love we can bear them, is trustworthy: the end of the paragraph about hunting should be re-written in a different manner,—to the same purpose,—and the rest of it left out.)

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humbleness of St. Francis of Assisi, who spoke never to bird nor to cicala, nor even to wolf and beast of prey, but as his brother; and so we find are moved the minds of all good and mighty men, as in the lesson that we have from the Mariner of Coleridge, and yet more truly and rightly taught in the Heartleap Well,

> "Never to blend our pleasure, or our pride,
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels;"

and again in the White Doe of Rylstone, with the added teaching, that anguish of our own—

> "Is tempted and allayed by sympathies,
> Aloft ascending and descending deep,
> Even to the inferior kinds."

So that I know not of anything more destructive of the whole Theoretic faculty, not to say of the Christian character and human intellect, than those accursed sports in which man makes of himself, cat, tiger, serpent, chætodon and alligator in one; and gathers into one continuance of cruelty, for his amuse-

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ment, all the devices that brutes sparingly and at intervals use against each other for their necessities.

3. As we pass from those beings of whose happiness and pain we are certain, to those in which it is doubtful, or only seeming, as possibly in plants (though I would fain hold, if I might, "the faith, that every flower enjoys the air it breathes,") yet our feeling for them has in it more of sympathy than of actual love, as receiving from them in delight far more than we can give; for love, I think, chiefly grows in giving;* at least its essence is the desire of doing good, or giving happiness.

* (This third paragraph, again, is mostly nonsense. Love can grow either in giving or taking, it does not matter which, when either is right,—and it will grow by neither, when they are wrong. And though it is very pretty and amusing to think of flowers as friends, or pets, yet it is to be remembered that an immense quantity of the pleasure we take in the beauty of the botanic world is given us by vegetable, which we are prepared mercilessly to thresh, mince, boil, and dine on.)

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Still the sympathy of very sensitive minds usually reaches so far as to the conception of life in the plant, and so to love, as with Shakspeare always, as he has taught us in the sweet voices of Ophelia and Perdita, and Wordsworth always, as of the daffodils and the celandine:

> "It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold.
> This neither is its courage, nor its choice,
> But its necessity in being old:"

and so all other great poets;* nor do I believe that any mind, however rude, is without some slight perception or acknowledgment of joyfulness in breathless things, as most certainly there are none but feel instinctive delight in the appearances of such enjoyment.

4. For it is matter of easy demonstration,†

* Compare Milton:

> "They at her coming sprung,
> And, touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew."

† (Here the rational development of the original proposition begins; and the reasoning is henceforward accurate and trustworthy, leading to many very useful conclusions, down to the end of the chapter.)

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that setting the characters of typical beauty aside, the pleasure afforded by every organic form is in proportion to its appearance of healthy vital energy. In a rose-tree, setting aside all the considerations of gradated flushing of colour, and fair folding of line, which its flowers share with the cloud or the snow-wreath, we find, in and through all this, certain signs pleasant and acceptable as signs of life and strength in the plant. Every leaf and stalk is seen to have a function, to be constantly exercising that function, and as it *seems*, *solely* for the good and enjoyment of the plant. It is true that reflection will show us that the plant is not living for itself alone, that its life is one of benefaction, that it gives as well as receives; but no sense of this whatsoever mingles with our perception of physical beauty in its forms. Those forms appear to be necessary to its health; the symmetry of its leaflets, the smoothness of its

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stalks, the vivid green of its shoots, are looked upon by us as signs of the plant's own happiness and perfection; they are useless to us except as they give us pleasure in our sympathizing with that of the plant; and if we see a leaf withered, or shrunk, or worm-eaten, we say it is ugly, and feel it to be painful, not because it hurts *us*, but because it seems to hurt the plant, and conveys to us an idea of pain and disease and failure of life in *it*.

That the amount of pleasure we receive is in exact proportion to the appearance of vigour and sensibility in the plant, is easily proved by observing the effect of those (vegetables) which show the evidences of it in the least degree, as, for instance, any of the cacti not in flower. Their masses are heavy and simple, their growth slow; their various parts, if they are ramified, jointed on one to another, as if they were buckled or pinned together instead of growing out of each other: and the fruit imposed upon

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the body of the plant, so that it looks like a swelling or disease. All these circumstances so concur to deprive the plant of vital evidences, that we receive from it more sense of pain than of beauty, and yet, even here, the sharpness of the angles, the symmetrical order and strength of the spines, the fresh and even colour of the body, are looked for earnestly as signs of healthy condition; our pain is increased by their absence, and indefinitely increased if blotches, and other appearances of decay, interfere with that little life which the plant seems to possess.

The same singular characters belong in animals to the crustacea, as to the lobster, crab, scorpion, etc., and in great measure deprive them of the beauty which we find in higher orders; so that we are reduced to look for their beauty to single parts and joints, and not to the whole animal.

5. Now I wish particularly to impress upon

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the reader that all these sensations of beauty in the plant arise from our unselfish sympathy with its happiness, and not from any view of the qualities in it which may bring good to us, nor even from our acknowledgment in it of any moral condition beyond that of mere felicity; for such an acknowledgment belongs to the second operation of the Theoretic faculty (compare § 1 *), and not to the sympathetic part which we are at present examining; so that we even find that in this respect, the moment we begin to look upon any creature as subordinate to some purpose out of itself, some of the sense of organic beauty

* (This ought to have been put down much more clearly, under *a* and *b* and *c* and *d*; but then it would not have read so prettily. It may be enough clarified if the reader will recollect simply that the first state of vital beauty is defined to be Happiness, perceived with sympathy; the second, Moral intention, perceived with praise. Hence the first aphorism of the Laws of Fésole: "All great art is praise.")

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is lost. Thus, when we are told that the leaves of a plant are occupied in decomposing carbonic acid, and preparing oxygen for us, we begin to look upon it with some such indifference as upon a gasometer. It has become a machine; some of our sense of its happiness is gone; its emanation of inherent life is no longer pure. The bending trunk, waving to and fro in the wind above the waterfall, is beautiful because it is happy, though it is perfectly useless to us.* The same trunk, hewn down, and thrown across the stream, has lost its beauty. It serves as a bridge,—it has become useful; and its beauty is gone, or what it retains is purely typical, dependent on its lines and colours, not on its functions. Saw it into planks, and though now adapted to become permanently useful, its beauty is lost for ever, or to be regained only when decay and ruin shall

* "Exiit ad cœlum ramis felicibus arbos."

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have withdrawn it again from use, and left it to receive from the hand of nature the velvet moss and varied lichen, which may again suggest ideas of inherent happiness, and tint its mouldering sides with hues of life.

There is something, I think, peculiarly beautiful and instructive in this unselfishness of the Theoretic faculty, and in its abhorrence of all utility to one creature which is based on the pain or destruction of any other; for in such services as are consistent with the essence and energy of both it takes delight, as in the clothing of the rock by the herbage, and the feeding of the herbage by the stream.

6. But still clearer evidence of its being indeed the expression of happiness to which we look for our first pleasure in organic form, is to be found in the way in which we regard the bodily frame of animals; of which it is to be noted first, that there is not anything which causes so intense and tormenting a

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sense of ugliness as any scar, wound, monstrosity, or imperfection which seems inconsistent with the animal's ease and health: and that, although in vegetables, where there is no immediate sense of pain, we are comparatively little hurt by excrescences and irregularities, but are sometimes even delighted with them, and fond of them, as children of the oak-apple, and sometimes look upon them as more interesting than the uninjured conditions, as in the gnarled and knotted trunks of trees; yet the slightest approach to anything of the kind in *animal* form is regarded with intense horror, merely from the sense of pain it conveys.

7. And, in the second place, it is to be noted that whenever we dissect the animal frame, or conceive it as dissected, and substitute in our thoughts the neatness of mechanical contrivance for the pleasure of the animal; the moment we reduce enjoyment

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to ingenuity, and volition to leverage, that instant, all sense of beauty ceases. Take, for instance, the action of the limb of the ostrich, which is beautiful so long as we see it in its swift uplifting along the desert sands, and trace in the tread of it her scorn of the horse and his rider, but would infinitely lose of its impressiveness, if we could see the spring ligament playing backwards and forwards in alternate jerks over the tubercle at the hock joint. Take again the action of the dorsal fin of the shark tribe.* So long as we observe the consistent energy of motion in the whole frame, the lash of the tail, bound of body, and instantaneous lowering of the dorsal, to avoid the resistance of the water, as it turns, there is high sense of organic power and beauty. But when we dissect the dorsal, and

* (A grievously ill-chosen example! The pretty dorsal crest of the little Venetian sea-horse had been more to the purpose,—but I don't know whether there are either pins or needles in it)

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find that its superior ray is supported in its position by a peg in a notch at its base, and that, when the fin is to be lowered, the peg has to be taken out, and, when it is raised, put in again; although we are filled with wonder at the ingenuity of the mechanical contrivance, all our sense of beauty is gone, and not to be recovered until we again see the fin playing on the animal's body, apparently by its own will alone, with the life running along its rays. It is by a beautiful ordinance of the Creator that all these mechanisms are concealed from sight, though open to investigation; and that in all which is outwardly manifested, we seem to see His presence rather than His workmanship, and the mysterious breath of life rather than the adaptation of matter.*

* (These continually reiterated passages against the study of anatomy ought to be collated by careful students of my books, for illustration of the final statements on the subject in 'Eagles' Nest.')

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If therefore, as I think appears from all evidence, it is the sense of felicity which we first desire in organic form, those forms will be the most beautiful (always, observe, leaving typical beauty out of the question) which exhibit most of power, and seem capable of most quick and joyous sensation. Hence we find gradations of beauty, from the impenetrable hide and slow movement of the elephant and the rhinoceros, from the foul occupation of the vulture, from the earthy struggling of the worm, to the brilliancy of the moth, the buoyancy of the bird, the swiftness of the fawn and the horse, the fair and kingly sensibility of man.

8. Thus far then, the Theoretic faculty is concerned with the *happiness* of animals, and its exercise depends on the cultivation of the affections only. Let us next observe how it is concerned with the *moral functions* of animals, and therefore how it is dependent

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on the cultivation of every moral sense. There is not any organic creature but, in its history and habits, will exemplify or illustrate to us some moral excellence or deficiency, or some point of God's providential government, which it is necessary for us to know. Thus the functions and the fates of animals are distributed to them, with a variety which exhibits to us the dignity and results of almost every passion and kind of conduct: some, filthy and slothful, pining and unhappy; some, rapacious, restless, and cruel; some, ever earnest and laborious, and, I think, unhappy in their endless labour; creatures, like the bee, that heap up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them; and others employed, like angels, in endless offices of love and praise. Of which, when in right condition of mind, we esteem those most beautiful, whose functions are the most noble, whether as some, in mere energy, or as others, in moral honour; so that we

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look with hate on the foulness of the sloth, and the subtlety of the adder, and the rage of the hyæna; with the honour due to their earthly wisdom we invest the earnest ant and unwearied bee; but we look with full perception of sacred function to the tribes of burning plumage and choral voice.* And so, what lesson we might receive for our earthly conduct from the creeping and laborious things, was taught us by that earthly King who made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, (yet thereafter was less rich toward God†). But from the lips of a heavenly King, who had not where to lay His head, we were taught what lesson we have to learn from those higher creatures who sow not, nor reap, nor gather

* "True to the kindred points of heaven and home."
WORDSWORTH, *To the Skylark.*

† (The reader had better take Dante's beautiful reading of the character of Solomon, than mine, "Spira di tal amor," &c., Par. x. 109; and "ch'ei fu Re," &c., Par. xiii. 95.)

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into barns, for their Heavenly Father feedeth them.

9. There are many hindrances in the way of our looking with this rightly balanced judgment on the moral functions of the animal tribes, owing to the independent and often opposing characters of typical beauty, as it seems arbitrarily distributed among them; so that the most fierce and cruel creatures are often clothed in the liveliest colours, and strengthened by the noblest forms; with this only exception, that so far as I know, *there is no high beauty in any slothful animal;* while even among those of prey, its characters exist in exalted measure upon those that range and pursue, and are in equal degree withdrawn from those that lie subtly and silently, in the covert of the reed, and fens. But we should sometimes check the repugnance or sympathy with which the ideas of their destructiveness or innocence accustom us to regard the animal

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tribes, as well as those meaner likes and dislikes which arise, I think, from the greater or less resemblance of animal powers to our own; and pursue the pleasures of typical beauty down to the scales of the alligator, the coils of the serpent, and the joints of the beetle; and again, on the other hand, sometimes regardless of the impressions of typical beauty, accept from each creature, great or small, the more important lessons taught by its position in creation, as sufferer or chastiser, as lowly or having dominion, as of foul habit or lofty aspiration; and from the several perfections which all illustrate or possess, courage, perseverance, industry, or intelligence, or, higher yet, love, and patience, and fidelity, and rejoicing, and never wearied praise.

10. That these moral perfections indeed are causes of beauty in proportion to their expression, is best proved by comparing those features of animals in which they are more or less

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apparent; as, for instance, the eyes, of which we shall find those ugliest which have in them no expression nor life whatever, but a corpse-like stare, or an indefinite meaningless glaring, as (in some lights) those of owls, and cats; and mostly of insects and of all creatures in which *the eye seems rather an external optical instrument, than a bodily member through which emotion and virtue of soul may be expressed,** because the seeming want of sensibility and vitality in a creature is the most painful of all wants. And, next to these in ugliness, come the eyes that gain vitality indeed, but only in the expression of intense malignity, as in the serpent and alligator; and next, to whose malignity is added the virtue of subtlety and keenness, as of the lynx and hawk; and then,

* (Modern science, as it has been often noticed in my subsequent writings, entirely ceases to understand the difference between eyes and microscopes.)

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by diminishing the malignity and increasing the expressions of comprehensiveness and determination, we arrive at those of the lion and eagle; and at last, by destroying malignity altogether, at the fair eye of the herbivorous tribes, wherein the superiority of beauty consists always in the greater or less sweetness and gentleness, primarily; as in the gazelle, camel,* and ox; and in the greater or less intellect, secondarily; as in the horse and dog; and, finally, in gentleness and intellect both in man. And, again, taking the mouth, another source of expression, we find it ugliest where it has none, as mostly in fish; or perhaps where, without gaining much in expression of any kind, it becomes a formidable destructive instrument, as again in the alligator; and then, by some increase of expres-

* (The gentle expression of the camel's eye is wholly deceptive. See Mr. Palgrave's account of him, "Arabia," chap. i., p. 39.)

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sion, we arrive at birds' beaks, wherein there is much obtained by the different ways of setting on the mandibles (compare the bills of the duck and the eagle); and thence we reach the finely developed lips of the carnivora (which nevertheless lose their beauty in the actions of snarling and biting), and from these we pass to the nobler because gentler and more sensitive, of the horse, camel, and fawn, and so again up to man: only the principle is less traceable in the mouths of the lower animals, because they are only in slight measure capable of expression, and chiefly used as instruments, and that of low function; whereas in man the mouth is given most definitely as a means of expression, beyond and above its lower functions. (See the remarks of Sir Charles Bell on this subject in his Essay on Expression; and compare the mouth of the negro head given by him (page 28, third edition) with that of Raffaelle's St. Catherine.) I shall

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illustrate the subject farther hereafter, by giving the mouth of one of the demons of Orcagna's Inferno, with projecting incisors, and that of a fish and a swine, in opposition to pure graminivorous and human forms;* but at present it is sufficient for my purpose to insist on the single great principle, that wherever expression is possible, and uninterfered with by characters of typical beauty, which confuse the subject exceedingly as regards the mouth, for the typical beauty of the carnivorous lips is on a grand scale, while it exists in very low degree in the beaks of birds; wherever, I say, these considerations do not interfere, the beauty of the animal form is in exact proportion to the amount of moral or intellectual virtue expressed by it: and wherever beauty exists at all, there is

* (Never done yet! in my published books: but the sketches and engravings of animals in my school at Oxford are enough to show what I meant.)

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some kind of *virtue* to which it is owing; as the majesty of the lion's eye is owing not to its ferocity, but to its seriousness and seeming intellect, and of the lion's mouth to its strength and sensibility, and not its gnashing of teeth, nor wrinkling in its wrath; and farther be it noted, that of the intellectual or moral virtues, the moral are those which are attended with most beauty; so that the gentle eye of the gazelle is fairer to look upon than the more keen glance of men, if it be unkind.

11. Of the parallel effects of expression upon plants there is little to be noted, as the mere naming of the subject cannot but bring countless illustrations to the mind of every reader: only this, that, as we saw they were less susceptible of our sympathetic love, owing to the absence in them of capability of enjoyment, so they are less open to the affections based upon the expression of moral virtue, owing to their want of volition; so that even

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on those of them which are deadly and unkind we look not without pleasure, the more because this their evil operation cannot be by them outwardly expressed, but only by us empirically known; so that of the outward seemings and expressions of plants, there are few but are in some way good and therefore beautiful, as of humility, and modesty, and love of places and things, in the reaching out of their arms, and clasping of their tendrils; and energy of resistance, and patience of suffering, and beneficence one toward another in shade and protection; and to us also in scents and fruits; (for of their healing virtues, however important to us, there is no more outward sense nor seeming than of their properties mortal or dangerous).

12. Whence, in fine, looking to the whole kingdom of organic nature, we find that our full receiving of its beauty depends, first on the sensibility, and then on the accuracy and

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faithfulness, *of the heart, in its moral judgments;* so that it is necessary that we should not only love all creatures well, but esteem them in that order which is according to God's laws and not according to our own human passions and predilections; not looking for swiftness, and strength, and cunning, rather than for patience and kindness; still less delighting in their animosity and cruelty one toward another: neither, if it may be avoided, interfering with the working of nature in any way; nor, when we interfere to obtain service, judging from the morbid conditions of the animal or vegetable so induced: for we see every day the power of general taste destroyed in those who are interested in particular animals, by their delight in the results of their own teaching, and by the vain straining of curiosity for new forms such as nature never intended; as the false types for instance, which we see earnestly sought for by the

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fanciers of rabbits and pigeons,* and constantly in horses, substituting for the true and balanced beauty of the free creature some morbid development of a single power, as of swiftness in the racer, at the expense, in certain measure, of the animal's healthy constitution and fineness of form; and so the delight of horticulturists in the spoiling of plants: so that in all cases we are to beware of such opinions as seem in any way referable to human pride, or even to the grateful or pernicious influence of things upon ourselves; and to cast the mind free, and out of ourselves, humbly, and yet always in that noble position of pause above the other visible creatures, nearer God than they, which we authoritatively hold; thence looking down upon them, and testing the clearness of our moral vision by the extent, and fulness, and constancy of our

* (Since, extended into the basis of the theory of Development!)

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pleasure in the light of God's love as it embraces them, and the harmony of His holy laws, that for ever bring mercy out of rapine and religion out of wrath.

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CHAPTER II.

Of Vital Beauty; II. Generic.

1. HITHERTO we have observed the conclusions of the Theoretic faculty with respect to the relations of happiness, and of *more or less exalted* function existing between *different orders* of organic being. But we must pursue the inquiry farther yet, and observe what impressions of beauty are connected with more or less perfect fulfilment of the *appointed* function by *different individuals* of the same species. We are now no longer called to pronounce upon worthiness of occupation or dignity of disposition; but both employment and capacity being known, and the animal's position and duty fixed, we have to regard it in that respect alone,

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comparing it with other individuals of its species, and to determine how far it worthily executes its office; whether, if scorpion, it have poison enough, or if tiger, strength enough, or if dove, innocence enough, to sustain rightly its place in creation, and come up to the perfect idea of dove, tiger, or scorpion.

In the first or sympathetic operation of the Theoretic faculty, it will be remembered, we receive pleasure from the signs of mere happiness in living things. In the second theoretic operation of comparing and judging, we constituted ourselves such judges of the lower creatures as Adam was made by God when they were brought to him to be named; and we allowed of beauty in them as they reached, more or less, to that standard of moral perfection by which we test ourselves. But in the third place we are to come down again from the judgment seat, and, taking it for granted that every creature of God is in some

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way good, and has a duty and specific operation providentially accessary to the wellbeing of all, we are to look, in this faith, to that employment and nature of each, and to derive pleasure from their entire perfection and fitness for the duty they have to do, and in their entire fulfilment of it; and so we are to take pleasure and find beauty in the magnificent binding together of the jaws of the ichthyosaurus for catching and holding, and in the adaptation of the lion for springing, and of the locust for destroying, and of the lark for singing, and in every creature for the doing of that which God has made it to do. Which faithful pleasure in the perception of the perfect operation of lower creatures I have placed last among the perceptions of the Theoretic faculty concerning them, because it is commonly last acquired, both owing to the humbleness and trustfulness of heart which it demands, and because it implies a knowledge of the habits and

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structure of every creature, such as we can but imperfectly possess.

2. The perfect *idea* of the form and condition in which all the properties of the species are fully developed, is called the Ideal of the species.* The question of the nature of ideal conception of species, and of the mode in which the mind arrives at it, has been the subject of so much discussion, and source of so much embarrassment, chiefly owing to that unfortunate distinction between Idealism and Realism which leads most people to imagine the Ideal opposed to the Real and therefore *false*, that I think it necessary to request the reader's most careful attention to the following positions. The following paragraphs are indeed of extreme importance, but parenthetic in this chapter.

* (For the definition of species itself, rarely, if ever, given amidst the contentions for its origin, see 'Deucalion,' vol. ii., chap. i.)

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Any work of art which represents, not a material object, but the mental conception of a material object, is, in the primary sense of the word, ideal. That is to say, it represents an idea and not a thing. Any work of art which represents or realizes a material object is, in the primary sense of the term, unideal.

Ideal works of art, therefore, in the first sense, represent the result of an act of imagination, and are good or bad in proportion to the healthy condition and general power of the imagination whose acts they represent.

Unideal works of art (the studious production of which is termed Realism) represent actual existing things, and are good or bad in proportion to the perfection of the representation.

All entirely bad works of art may be divided into those which, professing to be imaginative, bear no stamp of imagination, and are therefore false; and those which, professing to be

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representative of matter, miss of the representation, and are therefore nugatory.

It is the habit of most observers to regard art as representative of matter, and to look only for the entireness of representation ; and it was to this view of art that I limited the arguments of the former sections of the present work, wherein, having to oppose the conclusions of a criticism entirely based upon the realist system, I was compelled to meet that criticism on its own grounds. But the greater part of works of art, more especially those devoted to the expression of ideas of beauty, are the results of the agency of imagination, their worthiness depending, as above stated, on the healthy condition of the imagination.

Hence it is necessary for us, in order to arrive at conclusions respecting the worthiness of such works, to define and examine the nature of the imaginative faculty, and to determine, first, what are the signs or conditions

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of its existence at all; and secondly, what are the evidences of its healthy and efficient existence, upon which examination I shall enter in the next volume.*

3. But there is another sense of the word 'Ideal' besides this, and it is that with which we are here concerned.† It is evident that, so long as we apply the word to that art which represents ideas and not things, we may use it as truly of the art which represents an idea of

* (Of this edition; being the close of the second volume of the original work.)

† (And I heartily wish we had been *un*concerned about it. The whole of this chapter is extremely pedantic and tiresome; but not untrue, and towards the end containing some rather pretty talk, long afterwards carried on in 'Proserpina.' There is also an undercurrent of meaning in it — double meaning indeed — afterwards more or less enforced in all my writings, — first, that Greek idealism is dull, and that living girls may be very pretty without being like the Venus de' Medici;—secondly, that, as Mr. Wordsworth says, the imagination has still perhaps a point or two to "bestow" on them.)

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Caliban, and not real Caliban, as of the art which represents an idea of Antinous, and not real Antinous. For that is as much imagination which conceives the monster, as which conceives the man. If, however, Caliban and Antinous be creatures of the same species, and the form of the one contain not the fully developed types or characters of the species, while the form of the other presents the greater part of them, then the latter is said to be a form more ideal than the other, as a nearer approximation to the general 'idea' or conception of the species.

4. Now it is evident that this use of the word 'Ideal' is much less accurate than the other from which it is derived; for it rests on the assumption that the assemblage of all the characters of a species in their perfect development cannot exist but in the imagination. For if it can actually and in reality exist, it is not right to call it ideal or imaginary; it

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would be better to call it characteristic or general, and to reserve the word Ideal for the results of the operation of the imagination, either on the perfect or imperfect forms.

Nevertheless, the word 'Ideal' has been so long and universally accepted in this sense, that it becomes necessary to continue the use of it, so only that the reader will be careful to observe the distinction in the sense, according to the subject matter under discussion. At present then, using it as expressive of the noble generic form which indicates the full perfection of the creature in all its functions, I wish to examine how far this perfection exists, or may exist, in nature, and, if not in nature, how it is by us discoverable or imaginable.

5. It is well, when we wish to arrive at truth, always to take familiar instances, wherein the mind is not likely to be biassed by any elevated associations or favourite

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theories. Let us ask therefore, first, what kind of ideal form may be attributed to a limpet or an oyster; that is to say, whether all oysters do or do not come up to the entire notion or idea of an oyster.* I apprehend that, of those which are of full size and healthy condition, there will be found many which fulfil the conditions of an oyster in every respect; and that so perfectly, that we could not, by combining the features of two or more together, produce a more perfect oyster than any that we see. I suppose, also, that out of a number of healthy fish, birds, or beasts, of the same species, it would not be

* (This paragraph was, with too good reason, objected to by my critical friends. I thought it extremely crushing and Socratic; besides that, it began my proposed series of illustrations "from the mollusc to man." Long afterwards, I got Mr. Hunt to make me a drawing of the shell, but without the oyster! which, not being wholly satisfied with, I let pass out of my hands, much now to my regret.)

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easy to select an individual as superior to *all* the rest; neither, by comparing two or more of the nobler examples together, to arrive at the conception of a form superior to that of either; but that, though the accidents of more abundant food or more fitting habitation may induce among them some varieties of size, strength, and colour, yet the entire generic form would be presented by many, neither would any art be able to add to or diminish from it.

6. It is, therefore, hardly right to use the word 'Ideal' of the generic forms of these creatures, of which we see actual examples; but if we are to use it, then be it distinctly understood that its ideality consists in the full development of all the powers and properties of the creature as such; and is inconsistent with accidental or imperfect developments, and even with great variation from average size; the ideal size being neither gigantic nor

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diminutive, but the utmost grandeur and entireness of proportion at a certain point above the mean size; for as more individuals always fall short of generic size than rise above it, the generic is above the average or mean size.* And this perfection of the creature invariably involves the utmost possible degree of all those properties of beauty, both typical and vital, which it is appointed to possess.

7. Let us next observe the conditions of ideality in vegetables. Out of a large number of primroses or violets, I apprehend that, although one or two might be larger than all the rest, the greater part would be very sufficient primroses and violets; and that we could, by no study nor combination of violets, conceive of a better violet than many in the

* (Wrong. The mean size is the generic one,—and some ideals lean towards the tiny. Of course, I was thinking of Michael Angelo,—but had better have taken warning from Bandinelli.)

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bed. And so generally of the blossoms and separate members of all vegetables.

But among the entire forms of the complex vegetables, as of oak-trees, for instance, there exists very large and constant difference; some being what we hold to be fine oaks, as in parks and places where they are taken care of, and have their own way, and some are but poor and mean oaks, which have had no one to take care of them, but have been obliged to maintain themselves.

That which we have to determine is, whether ideality be predicable of the fine oaks only, or whether the poor and mean oaks also may be considered as ideal, that is, coming up to the conditions of oak, and the general notion of oak.

8. Now there is this difference between the positions held in creation by animals and plants, and thence in the dispositions with which we regard them; that the animals,

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being for the most part locomotive, are capable both of living where they choose, and of obtaining what food they want, and of fulfilling all the conditions necessary to their health and perfection. For which reason they are answerable for such health and perfection, and we should be displeased and hurt, if we did not find it in one individual as well as another.

But the case is evidently different with plants. They are intended fixedly to occupy many places comparatively unfit for them, and to fill up all the spaces where greenness, and coolness, and ornament, and oxygen are wanted, and that with very little reference to their comfort or convenience.* Now it would be hard upon the plant, if, after being tied to a particular spot, where it is indeed much wanted, and is a great blessing, but where it has enough to do to live; whence it cannot move to obtain what it

* (Compare the chapter on the Root, in 'Proserpina.')

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needs or likes, but must stretch its unfortunate arms here and there for bare breath and light, and split its way among rocks, and grope for sustenance in unkindly soil; it would be hard upon the plant, I say, if under all these disadvantages, it were made answerable for its appearance, and found fault with because it was not a fine plant of the kind.

9. And it seems to be that, in order that no unkind comparisons may be drawn between one and another, there are not appointed to plants the fixed number, position, and proportion of members which are ordained in animals (and any variation from which in these is unpardonable), but a continually varying number and position, even among the more freely growing examples, admitting therefore all kinds of license to those which have enemies to contend with; and that without in any way detracting from their dignity and perfection.

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So then there is in trees no perfect form which can be fixed upon or reasoned out as ideal; but that is always an ideal oak which, however poverty-stricken, or hunger-pinched, or tempest-tortured, is yet seen to have done, under its appointed circumstances, all that could be expected of oak.

The ideal, therefore, of the park oak is that which was described in the conclusion of the former part of this work; full size, united terminal curve, equal and symmetrical range of branches on each side. The wild oak may be anything; gnarled, and leaning, and shattered, and rock-encumbered, and yet ideal, so only that, amidst all its misfortunes, it maintain the dignity of oak; and, indeed, I look upon this kind of tree as more ideal than the other, in so far as by its efforts and struggles, more of its nature, enduring power, patience in waiting for, and ingenuity in obtaining, what it needs, is brought out, and

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so more of the essence of oak exhibited, than under more fortunate conditions.

10. And herein, then, we at last find the cause of that fact which we have twice already noted, that the exalted or seemingly improved condition, whether of plant or animal, induced by human interference, is not the true and artistical idea of it.* It has been well shown by Dr. Herbert,† that many plants are found alone on a certain soil or subsoil in a wild state, not because such soil is favourable to them, but because they alone are capable of

* I speak not here of those conditions of vegetation which have especial reference to man, as of seeds and fruits whose sweetness and farina seem in great measure given, not for the plant's sake, but for his, and to which therefore the interruption in the harmony of creation of which he was the cause is extended, and their sweetness and larger measure of good to be obtained only by his redeeming labour. His curse has fallen on the corn and the vine; and the wild barley misses of its fulness, that he may eat bread by the sweat of his brow.

† Journal of the Horticultural Society, Part I.

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existing on it, and because all dangerous rivals are by its inhospitality removed. Now if we withdraw the plant from this position, which it hardly endures, and supply it with the earth, and maintain about it the temperature, that it delights in; withdrawing from it, at the same time, all rivals, which, in such conditions, nature would have thrust upon it, we shall indeed obtain a magnificently developed example of the plant, colossal in size, and splendid in organization; but we shall utterly lose in it that moral ideal which is dependent on its right fulfilment of its appointed functions. It was intended and created by the Deity for the covering of those lonely spots where no other plant could live; it has been thereto endowed with courage, and strength, and capacities of endurance; its character and glory are not therefore in the gluttonous and idle feeding of its own over-luxuriance, at the expense of other creatures utterly destroyed

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and rooted out for its good alone, but in its right doing of its hard duty, and forward climbing into those spots of forlorn hope where it alone can bear witness to the kindness and presence of the Spirit that cutteth out rivers among the rocks, as He covers the valleys with corn; and there, in its vanward place, and only there, where nothing is withdrawn for it, nor hurt by it, and where nothing can take part of its honour, nor usurp its throne, are its strength, and fairness, and price, and goodness in the sight of God to be truly esteemed.

11. The first time that I saw the Soldanella alpina, before spoken of, it was growing, of magnificent size, on a sunny alpine pasture among bleating of sheep and lowing of cattle, associated with a profusion of Geum montanum, and Ranunculus pyrenæus. I noticed it only because new to me, nor perceived any peculiar beauty in its cloven flower. Some days after,

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I found it alone, among the rack of the higher clouds, and howling of glacier winds; and, as I described it, piercing through an edge of avalanche, which, in its retiring, had left the new ground brown and lifeless, and as if burned by recent fire; the plant was poor and feeble, and seemingly exhausted with its efforts, but it was then that I comprehended its ideal character, and saw its noble function and order of glory among the constellations of the earth.

The Ranunculus glacialis might perhaps by cultivation be blanched from its wan and corpse-like paleness to purer white, and won to more branched and lofty development of its ragged leaves. But the ideal of the plant is to be found only in the last, loose stones of the moraine, alone there; wet with the cold, unkindly drip of the glacier water, and trembling as the loose and steep dust, to which it clings, yields, ever and anon, and shudders and crumbles away from about its root.

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12. And if it be asked how this conception of the utmost beauty of ideal form is consistent with what we formerly argued respecting the pleasantness of the appearance of felicity in the creature, let it be observed, and for ever held, that the right and true happiness of every creature is in this very discharge of its function, and in those efforts by which its strength and inherent energy are developed; and that the repose of which we also spoke as necessary to all beauty, is, as was then stated, repose not of inanition, nor of luxury, nor of irresolution; but the repose of magnificent energy and being; in action, the calmness of trust and determination; in rest, the consciousness of duty accomplished and of victory won; and this repose and this felicity can take place as well in the midst of trial and tempest, as beside the waters of comfort; they perish only when the creature is either unfaithful to itself, or is afflicted by circumstances unnatural and

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malignant to its being, and for the contending with which it was neither fitted nor ordained. Hence that rest which is indeed glorious is of the chamois couched breathless on his granite bed, not of the stalled ox over his fodder; and that happiness which is indeed beautiful is in the bearing of those trial tests which are appointed for the proving of every creature, whether it be good, or whether it be evil; and in the fulfilment to the uttermost of every command it has received, and the out-carrying to the uttermost of every power and gift it has gotten from its God.

13. Therefore the task of the painter, in his pursuit of ideal form, is to attain accurate knowledge, so far as may be in his power, of the peculiar virtues, duties, and characters of every species of being; down even to the stone, for there is an ideality of stones according to their kind, an ideality of granite and slate and marble, and it is in the utmost and most

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exalted exhibition of such individual character, order, and use, that all ideality of art consists.* The more cautious he is in assigning the right species of moss to its favourite trunk, and the right kind of weed to its necessary stone; in marking the definite and characteristic leaf, blossom, seed, fracture, colour, and inward anatomy of everything, the more truly ideal his work becomes. All confusion of species, all careless rendering of character, all unnatural and arbitrary association, are vulgar and unideal in proportion to their degree.

14. It is to be noted, however, that Nature sometimes in a measure herself conceals these generic differences, and that when she displays

* (Extreme nonsense, I grieve to see—and say, and what is worse, unguarded nonsense; for I never really meant that "all" ideality of art consisted in specific distinctions. The passage is an impetuous slip in controversy, and meant to be conclusive against the people who had said that trees, in a painting, should be of no particular species.)

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them it is commonly on a scale too small for human hand to follow; the pursuit and seizure of the generic differences in their concealment, and the display of them on a larger and more palpable scale, is one of the wholesome and healthy operations of the imagination of which we are presently to speak.

Generic differences, being often exhibited by art in different manner from that of their natural occurrence, are, in this respect, more strictly and truly ideal in art than in reality.

15. This only remains to be noted, that, of all creatures whose existence involves birth, progress, and dissolution, ideality is predicable all through their existence, so that they be perfect with reference to their supposed period of being. Thus there is an ideal of infancy, of youth, of old age, of death, and of decay.* But

* (I suppose I meant this to be understood of dying vegetation, or mouldering rocks and walls. But the whole chapter is stupid and useless: all that it says, or intended

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when the ideal form of the species is spoken of or conceived in general terms, the form is understood to be of that period when the generic attributes are perfectly developed, and previous to the commencement of their decline. At which period all the characters of vital and typical beauty are commonly most concentrated in them, though the arrangement and proportion of these characters vary at different periods; youth having more of the vigorous beauty, and age of the reposing; youth of typical outward fairness, and age of expanded and etherealised moral expression; the babe, again in some measure atoning in gracefulness for its want of strength; so that the balanced glory of the creature continues in solemn interchange, perhaps even

> "Filling more and more with crystal light,
> As pensive evening deepens into night."

to say, is fortunately put in clearer form in the following chapter on the Imagination.)

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Hitherto, however, we have confined ourselves* to the examination of ideal form in the lower animals, and we have found that, to arrive at it, no exertion of fancy is required in combining forms, but only simple choice among those naturally presented, together with careful study of the habits of the creatures. I fear we shall arrive at a very different conclusion, in considering the ideal form of man.

* (I wish we had! The assertion comes oddly after I had just been talking of babies and old ladies.)

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CHAPTER III.

III. *Of Vital Beauty in Man.*

1. HAVING thus passed gradually through all the orders and fields of creation, and traversed that goodly line of God's happy creatures who "leap not, but express a feast, where all the guests sit close, and nothing wants," without finding any deficiency which human invention might supply, nor any harm which human interference might mend,* we come at last to set ourselves face to face with ourselves; expecting that in creatures made after the image of God, we are to find comeliness and completion more exquisite than in the fowls of the air and the things that pass through the paths of the sea.

* (Assumption again; and of the unblushingest.)

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But behold now a sudden change from all former experience. No longer among the individuals of the race is there equality or likeness,—a distributed fairness and fixed type visible in each; but evil diversity, and terrible stamp of various degradation: features seamed by sickness, dimmed by sensuality, convulsed by passion, pinched by poverty, shadowed by sorrow, branded with remorse; bodies consumed with sloth, broken down by labour, tortured by disease, dishonoured in foul uses; intellects without power, hearts without hope, minds earthly and devilish; our bones full of the sin of our youth, the heaven revealing our iniquity, the earth rising up against us, the roots dried up beneath, and the branch cut off above; well for us only, if, after beholding this our natural face in a glass, we desire not straightway to forget what manner of men we be.

2. Herein there is at last something, and

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too much, for that short-stopping intelligence and dull perception of ours to accomplish, whether in earnest fact, or in the seeking for the outward image of beauty:—to undo the devil's work; to restore to the body the grace and the power which inherited disease has destroyed; to restore to the spirit the purity, and to the intellect the grasp, that they had in Paradise. Now, first of all, this work, be it observed, is in no respect a work of imagination. Wrecked we are, and nearly all to pieces; but that little good *by which we are to redeem ourselves** is to be got out of the old wreck, beaten about and full of sand though it

* (I am glad to see that even in this Evangelical burst of flame upon the "corruption of human nature," I was at least quit of the folly of hoping for redemption except in personal effort. But I don't know what I meant by "the desert island of pride" as in opposition to effort, for a true Evangelical would say, the pride was in trying to do anything ourselves. I *believe* I must have meant the notion that everybody, once converted, was as good as anybody else.)

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be; and not out of that desert island of pride on which the devils split first, and we after them: and so the only restoration of the body that we can reach is not to be coined out of our fancies, but to be collected out of such uninjured and bright vestiges of the old seal as we can find and set together: and the ideal of the good and perfect soul, as it is seen in the features, is not to be reached by imagination, but by the seeing and reaching forth of the better part of the soul to that of which it must first know the sweetness and goodness in itself, before it can much desire, or rightly find, the signs of it in others.*

I say *much* desire and *rightly* find, because there is not any soul so sunk as not in some measure to feel the impression of mental beauty in the human features, and detest in

* (*This* sentence certainly does mean that a painter of saints must be a saint himself,—which is true: and many a time since, I've said so more plainly.)

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others its own likeness, and in itself despise that which of itself it has made.

3. Now, of the ordinary process by which the realization of ideal bodily form is reached there is explanation enough in all treatises on art, and it is so far well comprehended that I need not stay long to consider it. So far as the sight and knowledge of the human form, of the purest race, exercised from infancy constantly, but not excessively, in all exercises of dignity, not in straining dexterities, but in natural exercises of running, casting, or riding; practised in endurance, not of extraordinary hardship, for that hardens and degrades the body, but of natural hardship, vicissitudes of winter and summer, and cold and heat, yet in a climate where none of these are severe; surrounded also by a certain degree of right luxury, so as to soften and refine the forms of strength; so far as the sight of all this could render the mental

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intelligence of what is noble in human form so acute as to be able to abstract and combine, from the best examples so produced, that which was most perfect in each, so far the Greek conceived and attained the ideal of humanity: and on the Greek modes of attaining it, chiefly dwell those writers whose opinions on this subject I have collected; wholly losing sight of what seems to me the most important branch of the inquiry, namely, the influence, for good or evil, of the mind upon the bodily shape, the wreck of the mind itself, and the modes by which we may conceive of its restoration.

4. The visible operation of the mind upon the body may be classed under three heads.

First, the operation of the intellectual powers upon the features, in the fine cutting and chiselling of them, and removal from them of signs of sensuality and sloth, by which they are blunted and deadened; and

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substitution of energy and intensity for vacancy and insipidity (by which wants alone the faces of many fair women are utterly spoiled and rendered valueless); and by the keenness given to the eye and fine moulding and development to the brow, of which effects Sir Charles Bell has well described the desirableness and opposition to brutal types; only this he has not sufficiently observed, that there are certain virtues of the intellect in measure inconsistent with each other, as perhaps great subtlety with great comprehensiveness, and high analytical with high imaginative power, or that at least, if consistent and compatible, their signs upon the features are not the same, so that the outward form cannot express both, without in a measure expressing neither; and so there are certain separate virtues of the outward form correspondent with the more constant employment or more prevailing capacity of the brain, as

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the piercing keenness, or open and reflective comprehensiveness, of the eye and forehead: and that all these virtues of form are ideal, only those the most so which are the signs of the worthiest powers of intellect, though which these may be, we will not at present stay to inquire.

5. Secondly, the operation of the moral feelings conjointly with the intellectual powers on both the features and form. Now, the operation of the right moral feelings on the intellect is always for the good of the latter; for *it is not possible that selfishness should reason rightly in any respect,** but must be blind in its estimation of the worthiness of all things: neither anger, for that overpowers the reason or outcries it; neither sensuality,

* (Good: and the following passage is carefully written, and of considerable value: only it should have been noted that, since Faith holds the reins of Reason, she ought to be early taught to drive.)

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for that overgrows and chokes it; neither agitation, for that has no time to compare things together; neither enmity, for that must be unjust; neither fear, for that exaggerates all things; neither cunning and deceit, for that which is voluntarily untrue will soon be unwittingly so; but the great reasoners are self-command, and trust unagitated, and deep-looking Love, and Faith, which as she is above Reason, so she best holds the reins of it from her high seat; so that they err grossly who think of the right development even of the intellectual type as possible, unless we look to higher sources of beauty first. Nevertheless, though in their operation *upon* them, the moral feelings are thus elevatory of the mental faculties, yet in their conjunction *with* them they seem to occupy, in their own fulness, such space as to absorb and overshadow all else; so that, the simultaneous exercise of both being in a sort impossible,

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we occasionally find the moral part in full development and action, without corresponding expansion of the intellect (though never without healthy condition of it), as in the condition described by Wordsworth,

> "In such high hour
> Of visitation from the Living God,
> *Thought* was not;"

only, if we look far enough, we shall perhaps find that it is not intelligence itself, but the immediate act and effort of a laborious, struggling, and imperfect intellectual faculty, with which high moral emotion is inconsistent; and though we cannot, while we feel deeply, *reason* shrewdly, yet I doubt if, *except* when we feel deeply, we can ever *comprehend* fully; so that it is only the climbing and mole-like piercing, and not the sitting upon their central throne, nor emergence into light, of the intellectual faculties, which the full heart feeling allows not. Hence, therefore, in the indications

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of the countenance, they are only the hard cut lines, and rigid settings, and wasted hollows,* speaking of past effort and painfulness of mental application, which are inconsistent with expression of moral feeling, for all these are of infelicitous augury; but not the full and serene development of habitual command in the look, and solemn thought in the brow; only these, in their unison with the signs of emotion, become softened and gradually confounded with a serenity and authority of nobler origin.

6. But of the sweetness which that higher serenity (of happiness), and the dignity which that higher authority (of divine law, and not human reason) can and must stamp on the features, it would be futile to speak here at length: for I suppose that both are acknowledged on all hands, and that there is not any

* (In simpler terms, this I suppose means that angels must not be wrinkled, nor saints frown.)

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beauty but theirs, to which men pay long* obedience; at all events, if not by sympathy discovered, it is not in words explicable with what divine lines and lights the exercise of godliness and charity will mould and gild the hardest and coldest countenance, neither to what darkness their departure will consign the loveliest. For there is not any virtue the exercise of which, even momentarily, will not impress a new fairness upon the features; neither on them only, but on the whole body, both the intelligence and the moral faculties have operation; for even all the movements and gestures, however slight, are different in their modes according to the mind that governs them; and on the gentleness and decision of just feeling there follows a grace of action,

* (I do not know how 'long' the obedience may last: but it may be quite universal to types extremely the reverse of 'theirs'—as in London and Paris at present—1882.)

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and, through continuance of this, a grace of form, which by no discipline may be taught or attained.

7. The third point to be considered with respect to the corporeal expression of mental character is, that there is a certain period of the soul-culture when it begins to interfere with some of the characters of typical beauty belonging to the bodily frame; the stirring of the intellect wearing down the flesh, and the moral enthusiasm burning its way out to heaven, through the emaciation of the earthen vessel; and that there is, in this indication of subduing of the mortal by the immortal part, an ideal glory of perhaps a purer and higher range than that of the more perfect material form. We conceive, I think, more nobly of the weak presence of Paul, than of the fair and ruddy countenance of Daniel.

8. Now, be it observed that, in our statement of these three directions of mental influence,

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we have several times been compelled to stop short of definite conclusions, owing to the inconsistency, first, of different kinds of intellect with each other; secondly, of the moral faculties with the intellectual (and if we had separately examined the moral emotions, we should have found certain inconsistencies among them also); and again, of the soul-culture generally with the bodily perfections. Such inconsistencies we should find in the perfections of no other animal. The strength or swiftness of the Dog is not inconsistent with his sagacity, nor is bodily labour in the Ant and Bee destructive of their acuteness of instinct. And this peculiarity of relation among the perfections of man is no result of his fall or sinfulness, *but an evidence of his greater nobility*,* and of the goodness of God towards him.

* (I am thankful to have another sentence to italicize, introducing the better philosophy of my later works.)

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9. For the individuals of each race of lower animals, being not intended to hold among each other those relations of charity which are the privilege of humanity, are not adapted to each other's assistance, admiration, or support, by differences of power and function. But the Love of the human race is increased by their individual differences, and the Unity of the creature, as before we saw of all unity, made perfect by each having something to bestow and to receive, bound to the rest by a thousand various necessities and various gratitudes; humility in each rejoicing to admire in his fellow that which he finds not in himself, and each being in some respect the complement of his race.* Therefore, in investigating the signs of

* "In another sense still the human race may be considered *as one man only*. While each animal begins anew the work of its species, each human being does not begin anew the work of mankind. He continues it, and cannot but continue it. He receives, on his entrance into life, the heritage of all ages—he is the son of the whole human race.

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the ideal or perfect type of humanity, we must not presume on the singleness of that type; and yet, on the other hand, we must cautiously distinguish between differences conceivably existing in a perfect state, and differences resulting from immediate and present operation

Thousands of causes, thousands of persons have co-operated since the beginning of time to make him what he is. Man, isolated either in time or space, is not truly man. Absolute solitude transforms him into an animal, and much less than an animal, since he wants its infallible instincts, or has only in their stead a powerless reason, indolent, and as it were, shrouded. A man, then, does not come up to his type, does not perfectly exist, without his race; it is the race that makes him a man. And when we picture to ourselves a man existing by himself as man, and with all the attributes of his race, we dream; since a man purely individual and isolated is an impossibility. It is not thus in any other department of the animal kingdom. A whole does not exist anywhere else as in our race; but is it not wonderful that true individuality exists only in the same race also, and that the sole being whose nature is developed fully only as one of a race is also the only one who manifests the sentiment of liberty, morality, and the consciousness implied in the word Me?" — *Vinet's (Alex.) Vital Christianity.*

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of the Adamite curse.* Of which the former are differences that bind, and the latter that separate. For although we can suppose the ideal or perfect human heart, and the perfect human intelligence, equally adapted to receive every right sensation, and pursue every order of truth, yet as it is appointed for some to be in authority and others in obedience, some in solitary functions and others in relative ones, some to receive and others to give, some to teach and some to discover; and as all these varieties of office are not only conceivable as existing in a perfect state of man, but seem almost to be implied by it, and at any rate cannot be done away with but by a total

* (In order to accept the statements in the following passage, one of the best, of its kind, in this book, it is not necessary that the reader should believe the literal story of the Fall, but only that, in some way, "Sin entered into the world, and Death by Sin." For more definite expression of my own belief and meaning, the reader should refer to the 8th chapter of "Deucalion.")

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change of his constitution and dependencies, of which the imagination can take no hold; so there are habits and capacities of expression induced by these various offices, which admit of many separate ideals of equal perfection.

10. There is an ideal of Authority, of Judgment, of Affection, of Reason, and of Faith;* neither can any combination of these ideals be attained; not that the just judge is to be supposed incapable of affection, nor the king incapable of obedience, but as it is impossible that any essence short of the Divine should at the same instant be equally receptive of all emotions, those emotions which, by right and order have the most usual victory, both leave the

* (I meant, of the countenances expressing these different characters. The analysis, given without explanation, is very close and subtle. 'Authority' is the character of a person who establishes law;—'Judgment,' of one who applies it;—'Affection,' of one whose law is love. 'Reason,' as the mistress of Investigation, is opposed to 'Faith,' the mistress of Imagination.)

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stamp of their habitual presence on the body, and render the individual more and more susceptible of them in proportion to the frequency of their prevalent recurrence. Still less can the differences of age and sex, though seemingly of more finite influence, be banished from any human conception. David, ruddy and of a fair countenance, with the brook stone of deliverance in his hand, is not more ideal than David leaning on the old age of Barzillai, returning chastened to his kingly home. And they who are as the angels of God in heaven, yet cannot be conceived as so assimilated that their different experiences and affections upon earth shall then be forgotten and effectless; the child taken early to his place cannot be imagined to wear there such a body, nor to have such thoughts, as the glorified apostle who has finished his course and kept the faith on earth. And so whatever perfections and likeness of love we may attribute to either the tried or the

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crowned creatures, there is the difference of the stars in glory among them yet; differences of original gifts, though not of occupying till their Lord come; different dispensations of trial and of trust, of sorrow and support, both in their own inward, variable hearts, and in their positions of exposure or of peace, of the gourd shadow and the smiting sun, of calling at heat of day or eleventh hour, of the house unroofed by faith, or the clouds opened by revelation; differences in warning, in mercies, in sicknesses, in signs, in time of calling to account; alike only they all are, by that which is not of them, but the gift of God's unchangeable mercy. "I will give unto this last even as unto thee."

11. Hence, then, it will follow, that we must not determinedly banish from the human form and countenance, in our restoration of its ideal, everything which can be ultimately traced to the Adamite Fall for its cause, but only the

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immediate operation and presence of the degrading power of sin. For there is not any part of our nature, nor can there be through eternity, uninfluenced or unaffected by the fall, and that not in any way of degradation, for the renewing in the divinity of Christ is a nobler condition than that of Paradise; and yet throughout eternity it must imply and refer to the disobedience, and the corrupt state of sin and death, and the suffering of Christ Himself, which can we conceive of any redeemed soul as for an instant forgetting, or as remembering without sorrow? Neither are the alternations of joy and such sorrow as by us is inconceivable, being only as it were a softness and silence in the pulse of an infinite felicity, inconsistent with the state even of the unfallen; for the angels, who rejoice over repentance, cannot but feel an uncomprehended pain as they try and try again in vain, whether they may not

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warm hard hearts with the brooding of their kind wings.

12. So that we have not to banish from the ideal countenance the evidences of sorrow, nor of past suffering, nor even of past and conquered sin, but only the immediate operation of any evil, or the immediate coldness and hollowness of any good emotion. And hence in that contest before noted, between the body and the soul, we may often have to indicate the body as far conquered and outworn, and with signs of hard struggle and bitter pain upon it; and yet without ever diminishing the purity of its ideal: and since it is not in the power of any human imagination to reason out or conceive the countless modifications of experience, suffering, and separated feeling, which have modelled and written their indelible images, in various order, upon every human countenance, so no right ideal can be reached by any combination of feature nor by any

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moulding and melting of individual beauties together, and still less without model or example at all; but *there is a perfect ideal to be wrought out of every face around us* that has on its forehead the writing and the seal of the angel ascending from the East*, by the earnest study and penetration of the written history thereupon, and the banishing of the blots and stains, wherein we still see, in all that is human, the visible and instant operation of unconquered Sin.

13. Now I see not how any of the steps of the argument by which we have arrived at this conclusion can be evaded, and yet it would be difficult to state anything more directly opposite to the general teaching and practice of artists. It is usual to hear portraiture opposed to the pursuit of ideality, and yet we find that no face can be ideal which is not a portrait. Of this general principle, however,

* Rev. vii. 2.

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there are certain modifications which we must presently state; but let us first pursue it a little farther, and deduce its practical consequences.

These are, first, that the pursuit of idealism in humanity, as of idealism in lower nature, can be successful only when followed through the most constant, patient, and humble rendering of actual models, accompanied with that earnest mental study of each, which can interpret all that is written upon it, disentangle the hieroglyphics of its sacred history, rend the veil of the bodily temple, and rightly measure the relations of good and evil contending within it for mastery; that everything done without such study must be shallow and contemptible; that generalization or combination of individual character will end less in the mending than the losing of it, and, except in certain instances of which we shall presently take note, is valueless and vapid,

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even if it escape being painful from its want of truth.

14. And that habit of the old and great painters of introducing portrait into all their highest works, I look to, not as error in them, but as the very source and root of their superiority in all things; for they were too great and too humble not to see in every face about them that which was above them, and which no fancies of theirs could match nor take place of: wherefore we find the custom of portraiture constant with them, both portraiture of study and for purposes of analysis, as with Leonardo; and actual, professed, serviceable, hardworking portraiture of the men of their time, as with Raffaelle, and Titian, and Tintoret; and portraiture of love, as with Fra Bartolomeo of Savonarola, and Simon Memmi of Petrarch, and Giotto of Dante, and Gentile Bellini of a beloved imagination of Dandolo, and with Raffaelle

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constantly; and portraiture for the sake of the nobility of personal character even in their most imaginative works, as was the practice of Ghirlandajo perpetually, and Masaccio and Raffaelle, and manifestly of the men of highest and purest ideal purpose, as again Giotto, and in his characteristic monkish heads, Angelico, and John Bellini (note especially the St. Christopher at the side of that mighty picture of St. Jerome, at Venice): and so of all: which practice had indeed a perilous tendency among men of debased mind, who used models such as and where they ought not; or among men who looked not at their models with intellectual or loving penetration, but took the outside of them, or perhaps took the evil and left the good, as even Titian has done in that academy study at Venice which is called a St. John, and all workers whatsoever that I know of, after Raffaelle's time, as Guido and the Caracci, and such others; but it is nevertheless

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the necessary and sterling basis of all ideal art, neither has any great man ever been able to do without it, nor dreamed of doing without it even to the close of his days.

15. And therefore there is not any greater sign of want of vitality and hopefulness in the schools of the present day, than that unhappy prettiness and sameness under which they mask, or rather for which they barter, in their lentil thirst, all the birthright and power of nature; which prettiness, wrought out and spun fine in the study, till it hardly betters the blocks on which dresses and hair are tried in barbers' windows and milliners' books, cannot but be revolting to any man who has his eyes, even in a measure, open to the divinity of the immortal seal on the common features that he meets in the highways and hedges hourly and momentarily, outreaching all efforts of conception as all power of realization, were it Raffaelle's three

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times over, even when the glory of the wedding garment is not there.*

If, then, individual humanity be taken as the basis of our conception, its right ideal is to be reached, we have asserted, only by the banishment of the immediate signs of sin upon the countenance and body. How, therefore, are the signs of sin† to be known and separated?

16. No intellectual operation is here of any avail. There is not any reasoning by which the evidences of depravity are to be traced in movements of muscle or forms of feature; there is not any knowledge, nor experience, nor diligence of comparison that can be of

* (The error, since this passage was written, has been reversed: we have now plenty of wayside painting, but scarcely any ideal or historical: still less religious. The paragraph itself is expanded and explained in the chapter on "Purism" in the third volume of "Modern Painters.")

† ("As separated from the evil of distress," I should have said.)

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avail. Here, as throughout the operation of the Theoretic faculty, the perception is altogether moral, an instinctive love and clinging to the lines of light. Nothing but love can read the letters, nothing but sympathy catch the sound; there is no pure passion that can be understood or painted except by pureness of heart; the foul or blunt feeling will see itself in everything, and set down blasphemies; it will see Baalzebub in the casting out of devils; it will find its God of flies in every alabaster box of precious ointment. The indignation of zeal toward God it will take for anger against man; faith and veneration it will miss, as not comprehending; charity it will turn into lust; compassion into pride; every virtue it will go over against, like Shimei, casting dust. But the right Christian mind will, in like manner, find its own image wherever it exists; it will seek for what it loves, and draw it out

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of all dens and caves, and it will believe in its being, often when it cannot see it, and always turn away its eyes from beholding vanity; and so it will lie lovingly over all the faults and rough places of the human heart, as the snow from heaven does over the hard, and black, and broken mountain rocks, following their forms truly, and yet catching light for them to make them fair, and that must be a steep and unkindly crag indeed which it cannot cover.

17. Now of this spirit there will always be little enough in the world, and it cannot be given nor taught by men, and so it is of little use to insist on it farther; only I may note some practical points respecting the ideal treatment of human form, which may be of some use. There is not the face, I have said, which the painter may not make ideal if he choose; but that subtle feeling which shall find out all of good that there is in any given

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countenance is not, except by concern for other things than art, to be acquired. But certain broad indications of evil there are which the bluntest feeling may perceive, and which the habit of distinguishing and casting out would both ennoble the schools of art, and lead, in time, to greater acuteness of perception with respect to the less explicable characters of soul beauty.

18. Those signs of evil which are commonly most manifest on the human features are roughly divisible into these four kinds; the signs of pride, of sensuality, of fear, and of cruelty. Any one of which will destroy the ideal character of the countenance and body.

19. Now of these, the first, Pride, is perhaps the most destructive of all the four, seeing it is the undermost and original vice of all; and it is base also from the necessary foolishness of it, because at its best, when grounded on a just estimation of our own elevation or superi-

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ority above certain others, it cannot but imply that our eyes look downward only, and have never been raised above our own measure; for there is not the man so lofty in his standing or capacity, but he must be humble in thinking of the cloud habitation and far sight of the angelic intelligences above him; and in perceiving what infinity there is of things he cannot know, nor even reach unto, as it stands compared with that little body of things he can reach, and of which nevertheless he can altogether understand not one; not to speak of that wicked and fond attributing of such excellency as he may have to himself, and thinking of it as his own getting (which is the real essence and criminality of Pride):* nor of

* (The words in parenthesis are false. The criminality of pride is a selfish pleasure in our own pre-eminence, whether it be acknowledged as God's gift or not. "Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are." The denial of the power of God, as by Nebuchadnezzar, is impiety *added to* pride.)

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those viler forms of it, founded on false estimation of things beneath us and irrational contemning of them: but, taken at its best, it is still base to that degree that there is no grandeur of feature which it cannot destroy and make despicable, so that the first step towards the ennobling of any face is the ridding it of its vanity; to which aim there cannot be anything more contrary than that principle of portraiture which prevails with us in these days, whose end seems to be the expression of vanity throughout, in face and in all circumstances of accompaniment; tending constantly to insolence of attitude, and levity and haughtiness of expression, and worked out farther in mean accompaniments of worldly splendour and possession; together with hints or proclamations of what the person has done or supposes himself to have done, which if known, it is gratuitous in the portrait to exhibit, and, if unknown, it is insolent in the

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portrait to proclaim: whence has arisen such a school of portraiture as must make the people of the nineteenth century the shame of their descendants, and the butt of all time.* To which practices are to be opposed both the glorious severity of Holbein, and the mighty and simple modesty of Raffaelle, Titian, Giorgione, and Tintoret, with whom armour does not constitute the warrior, neither silk the dame. And from what feeling the dignity of that portraiture arose, is best traceable at Venice, where we find their victorious doges painted neither in the toil of battle nor the triumph of return; nor set forth with thrones and curtains of state, but kneeling, always crownless, and returning thanks to God for His help; or, as priests, interceding for the nation in its afflic-

* (Rather strong, this! but extremely true. All the paragraph is valuable, and its sequel, to the end of the chapter, excellent in general criticism, and, with the slight exceptions noted, the basis of all my critical teaching since.)

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tion. But this feeling and its results have been so well traced by Rio,* that I need not speak of it further.

20. That second destroyer of ideal form, the appearance of Sensual character, though not less fatal in its operation on modern art, is more difficult to trace, owing to its peculiar subtlety. For it is not possible to say by what minute differences the right conception of the human form is separated from that which is luscious and foul: for the root of all is in the love and seeking of the painter, who, if of impure and feeble mind, will cover all that he touches with clay staining, as Bandinelli puts a scent of common flesh about his marble Christ, and as many, whom I will not here name, among moderns; but if of mighty mind or pure, may pass through all places of foulness, and none will stay upon him, as Michael Angelo; or he will baptize all things and wash

* De la Poésie Chrétienne. Forme de l'Art, chap. viii.

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them with pure water, as our own Stothard. Now, so far as this power is dependent on the seeking of the artist, and is only to be seen in the work of good and spiritually-minded men, it is vain to attempt to teach or illustrate it; neither is it here the place to show how it belongs to the representation of the mental image of things, instead of things themselves, of which we are to speak in treating of the imagination; but thus much may here be noted of broad, practical principle, that the purity of flesh painting depends, in very considerable measure, on the intensity and warmth of its *colour*.*

21. For if it be opaque, and clay cold, and devoid of all the radiance and life of flesh, the lines of its true beauty, being severe and firm, will become so hard in the loss of the glow and

* (I am glad to see how early this great principle of colour, so contrary to the common estimate of it, was known to me, and thus strongly asserted.)

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gradation by which nature illustrates them, that the painter will be compelled to sacrifice them for a luscious fulness and roundness, in order to give the conception of flesh; which, being done, destroys ideality of form as of colour, and gives all over to lasciviousness of surface; showing also that the painter sought for this, and this only, since otherwise he had not taken a subject in which he knew himself compelled to surrender all sources of dignity. Whereas right splendour of colour both bears out a nobler severity of form, and is in itself purifying and cleansing, like fire; furnishing also to the painter an excuse for the choice of his subject,* seeing that he may be supposed as not having painted it but in the admiration of its abstract glory of colour and form, and with no unworthy seeking.

22. But the mere power of perfect and

* (Nevertheless, he ought not to take subjects *needing* excuse.)

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glowing colour will, in some sort, redeem even a debased tendency of mind itself, as eminently the case with Titian, who, though often treating base subjects, or elevated subjects basely, as in the disgusting Magdalen of the Pitti Palace, and that of the Barberigo at Venice, yet redeems all by his glory of hue, so that he cannot paint altogether coarsely; and with Giorgione, who had more imaginative intellect, the sense of nudity is utterly lost, and there is no need nor desire of concealment any more, but his naked figures move among the trees like fiery pillars, and lie on the grass like flakes of sunshine.*

23. With the religious painters, on the other hand, such nudity as they were compelled to treat is redeemed as much by severity of form and hardness of line as by colour, so that generally their draped figures are preferable. But they, with Michael Angelo and most of

* As in the noble Louvre picture.

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the Venetians, form a great group, pure in sight and aim, between which and all other schools by which the nude has been treated, there is a gulf fixed, and all the rest, compared with them, seem striving how best to illustrate Spencer's stanza in its second clause—

> "Of all God's works which doe this worlde adorn,
> There is no one more faire, and excellent,
> Than is man's body both for power and forme
> Whiles it is kept in sober government.
> *But none than it more foul and indecent*
> *Distempered through misrule and passions bace.*"

24. Of these last, however, with whom ideality is lost, there are some worthier than others, according to that measure of colour they reach, and power they possess. Much may be forgiven to Rubens; less, as I think, to Correggio, who has more of inherent sensuality wrought out with attractive and luscious refinement, and that alike in all subjects; as in the Madonna of the Incoronazione, over the high altar of San Giovanni at Parma, of which

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the head and upper portion of the figure, now preserved in the library, might serve as a model of attitude and expression to a ballet figurante :* and again in the lascivious St. Catherine of the Giorno, and in the Charioted Diana (both at Parma), not to name any of his works of aim more definitely evil. Beneath which again will fall the works devoid alike of art and decency, as that Susannah of Guido, in our own gallery ; and so we may descend to the absolute clay of the moderns, excepting always Etty ;† only noticing in all how much of what is evil and base in subject or tendency, is redeemed by what is pure and right in hue ; so that I do not assert that the purpose and

* The Madonna turns her back to Christ, and bends her head over her shoulder to receive the crown, the arms being folded with studied grace over the bosom.

† (Not in the least excepting him. This sentence, I fear, is mere politeness to a painter then living ; and it ought to have been explained as only meaning that his colour was not 'absolute clay.')

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object of many of the grander painters of the nude, as of Titian, for instance, were always elevated, but only that we, who cannot paint the lamp of fire within the earthen pitcher, must take other weapons in our left hands.

25. And it is to be noted also, that, in climates where the body can be more openly and frequently visited by sun and weather, the nude both comes to be regarded in a way more grand and pure, as necessarily awakening no ideas of base kind* (as pre-eminently with the Greeks), and also from that exposure receives a firmness and sunny elasticity very different from the silky softness of the clothed nations of the north, where every model necessarily looks as if accidentally undressed; and hence from the very fear and doubt with which we approach the nude, it becomes expressive of evil; and for that daring frankness of the old

* (Utterly bad writing again: I ought to have said, "as not of necessity awakening ideas," etc.)

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men, which seldom missed of human grandeur, even when it failed of holy feeling, we have substituted a mean, carpeted, gauze-veiled, mincing sensuality of curls and crisping-pins, out of which, I believe, nothing can come but moral enervation and mental paralysis.*

26. Respecting those two other vices of the human form, the expressions of Fear and Ferocity, there is less to be noted, as they only occasionally enter into the conception of character; only it is most necessary to make careful distinction between the *conception* of power, destructiveness, or majesty, in matter, influence, or agent, and the actual *fear* of any of these: for it is possible to conceive of terribleness, without being in a position obnoxious to the danger of it, and so without fear; and the feeling arising from this contemplation of dreadfulness, ourselves

* (Too truly prophesied; the vile help of photography hastening the corruption.)

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being in safety, as of a stormy sea from the shore, is properly termed Awe, and is a most noble passion; whereas fear, mortal and extreme, may be felt respecting things ignoble, as the falling from a window, and without any conception of terribleness or majesty in the thing, or the accident dreaded: and even when fear is felt respecting things sublime, as thunder, or storm of battle, the tendency of it is to destroy all power of contemplation of their majesty, and to freeze and contract all the intellect into a shaking heap of clay; for absolute acute fear is of the same unworthiness and contempt from whatever source it arise, and degrades the mind and the outward bearing of the body alike, even though it be among hail of heaven, and fire running along the ground.

27. And so among the children of God,*

* (The insolence of these abrupt and unhesitating theological assertions, now become extremely painful to me,

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while there is always that fearful and bowed apprehension of His majesty, and that sacred dread of all offence to Him, which is called the Fear of God, yet of real and essential fear there is not any, but clinging of confidence to him as their Rock, Fortress, and Deliverer; and perfect love, and casting out of fear; so that it is not possible that, while the mind is rightly bent on Him, there should be dread of anything either earthly or supernatural; and the more dreadful seems the height of His majesty, the less fear they feel that dwell in the shadow of it ("Of whom shall I be afraid?"), so that they are as David was, "devoted to his fear;" whereas, on the other hand, those who, if they may

and much repented of, yet is in this degree pardonable, that it is part of the main argument of the book, taken up in different places, as the occasion serves, or tempts. The words 'children of God' were meant only as a short expression for those who have entered His kingdom as a little child.)

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help it, never conceive of God, but thrust away all thought and memory of Him, and in His real terribleness and omnipresence fear Him not nor know Him, yet are by real, acute, piercing, and ignoble fear, haunted for evermore; fear inconceiving and desperate, that calls to the rocks, and hides in the dust; and hence the peculiar baseness of the expression of terror, a baseness attributed to it in all times, and among all nations, as of a passion atheistical, brutal, and profane.

28. So, also, it is always joined with ferocity,* which is of all passions the least human; for of sensual desires there is license to men, as necessity; and of vanity there is intellectual cause, so that when seen in a brute

* (This is as bad as one of Gibbon's generalizations—"The timid are always cruel," and the like. It is, of course, nonsense; many of the timidest creatures being also the sweetest, and most of the fierce ones fearless. The substance of what follows, however, is right enough.)

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it is pleasant, and a sign of good wit; and of fear there is at times necessity and excuse, as being allowed for prevention of harm; but of ferocity there is no excuse nor palliation, but it is pure essence of tiger and demon, and it casts on the human face the paleness alike of the horse of Death, and the ashes of Hell.

29. Therefore, of all subjects that can be admitted to sight, the expressions of fear and ferocity are the most foul and detestable; and so there is in them I know not what sympathetic attractiveness for minds cowardly and base, as the vulgar of most nations; and, as they are easily rendered by men who can render nothing else, they are often trusted in by the herd of painters incapable and profane, as in that monstrous abortion of the first room of the Louvre, called the Deluge, whose subject is pure, acute, mortal fear; and so generally in the senseless horrors of the modern French schools, spawn of the guillo-

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tine; also there is not a greater test of grandeur or meanness of mind than the expressions it will seek for and develope in the features and forms of men in fierce strife; whether determination and devotion, and all the other attributes of that unselfishness which constitutes heroism, as in the warrior of Agasias; and distress not agitated nor unworthy, though mortal, as in the dying gladiator; or brutal ferocity and butchered agony, of which the lowest and least palliated examples are those battles of Salvator Rosa which none but a man base-born, and thief-bred, could have conceived without sickening; of which I will only name that example in the Pitti Palace, wherein the chief figure in the foreground is a man with his arm cut off at the shoulder, run through the other hand into the breast with a lance.* And manifold

* Compare Michelet, "Du Prêtre, de la Femme, de la Famille," chap. iii. note. He uses language too violent to

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instances of the same feeling are to be found in the repainting of the various representations of the Inferno, so common through Italy; more especially that of Orcagna's in the Campo Santo, wherein the few figures near the top that yet remain untouched are grand in their severe drawing and expressions of enduring despair, while those below, repainted by Solazzino, depend for their expressiveness upon torrents of blood; so in the Inferno of Santa Maria Novella, and of the Arena chapel, not to speak of the horrible images of the Passion, by which vulgar Romanism has always striven to excite the languid sympathies of its untaught flocks. Of which foulness let us reason no farther, the very image and memory of them being pollution; only notic-

be quoted; but excuses Salvator by reference to the savage character of the Thirty Years' War. That this excuse has no validity may be proved by comparing the painter's treatment of other subjects.

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ing this, that there has always been a morbid tendency in Romanism towards the contemplation of bodily pain, owing to the attribution of saving power to it; which, like every other moral error, has been of fatal effect in art, leaving not altogether without the stain and blame of it even the highest of the Romanist painters; as Fra Angelico, for instance, who, in his Passion subjects, always insists weakly on the bodily torture, and is unsparing of blood; and Giotto, though his treatment is usually grander, as in that Crucifixion over the door of the Convent of St. Mark's, where the blood is hardly actual, but issues from the feet in a conventional form, and becomes a crimson cord which is twined strangely beneath about a skull; only what these holy men did to enhance, even though in their means mistaken, the impression and power of the sufferings of Christ, or of His saints, is always in a measure noble, and to be distinguished

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with all reverence from the abominations of the irreligious painters following; as of Camillo Procaccini, in one of his martyrdoms in the Gallery of the Brera, at Milan, and other such, whose names may be well spared to the reader.

30. These, then, are the four passions whose expression, in any degree, is degradation to the human form. But of all passion it is to be observed, that it becomes ignoble either when entertained respecting unworthy objects, and therefore shallow or unjustifiable; or when of impious violence, and so destructive of human dignity. Thus Grief is noble, or the reverse, according to the dignity and worthiness of the object lamented, and the grandeur of the mind enduring it. The sorrow of mortified vanity or avarice is simply disgusting; even that of bereaved affection may be base, if selfish and unrestrained. All grief that convulses the features is ignoble because

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it is commonly shallow, and certainly temporary, as in children; though in the shock and shiver of a strong man's features, under sudden and violent grief, there may be something of sublime. The grief of Guercino's Hagar, in the Brera Gallery at Milan, is partly despicable, partly disgusting, partly ridiculous; it is not the grief of the injured Egyptian, driven forth into the desert with the destiny of a nation in her heart; but of a servant of all work turned away for stealing tea and sugar.*

31. Common painters forget that passion is not absolutely, and in itself, great or violent, but only in proportion to the weakness of the mind it has to deal with; and that, in exaggerating its outward signs, they are not

* (Extremely right; and the entire contents of this paragraph, with the 31st, are of great general value They are much illustrated and reinforced in my later writings.)

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exalting the passion, but lowering the hero.* They think too much of passions as always the same in their nature: forgetting that the love of Achilles is different from the love of Paris, and of Alcestis from that of Laodamia. The use and value of passion is not as a subject of contemplation in itself, but as it breaks up the fountains of the great deep of the human mind, or displays its mightiness and ribbed majesty, as mountains are seen in their stability best among the coil of clouds; whence, in fine, I think it is to be held, that all passion which attains overwhelming power, so that it is not as resisting, but as conquered, that the creature is contemplated, is unfit for high art, and destructive of the ideal character of the countenance: and, in this respect, I cannot

* "The fire, that mounts the liquor till it run o'er,
In seeming to augment it, wastes it."

Henry VIII.

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but hold Raffaelle to have erred in his endeavour to express passion of such acuteness in the human face; as in the fragment of the Massacre of the Innocents in our own gallery (wherein, repainted though it be, I suppose the purpose of the master is yet to be understood); for if such subjects are to be represented at all, their entire expression may be given without degrading the face, as we shall presently see done with unspeakable power by Tintoret; and I think that all subjects of the kind, all human misery, slaughter, famine, plague, peril, and crime, are better in the main avoided, as of unprofitable and hardening influence, unless so far as out of the suffering, hinted rather than expressed, we may raise into nobler relief the eternal enduring of fortitude and affection, of mercy and self-devotion; or when, as by the threshing-floor of Ornan, and by the

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cave of Lazarus, the angel of the Lord is to be seen in the chastisement, and his love to be manifested to the despair, of men.

32. Thus, then, we have in some sort enumerated those evil signs which are most to be shunned in the seeking of Ideal beauty;* though it is not the knowledge of them, but the dread and hatred of them, which will effectually aid the painter; as, on the other hand, it is not by mere admission of the loveliness of good and holy expression that its subtle characters are to be traced. Raffaelle himself, questioned on this subject, made doubtful answer: he probably could not trace

* Let it be observed that it is always of beauty, not of human character in its lower and criminal modifications, that we have been speaking. That variety of character therefore, which we have affirmed to be necessary, is the variety of Giotto and Angelico, not of Hogarth. Works concerned with the exhibition of general character are to be spoken of in the consideration of Ideas of Relation.

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through what early teaching, or by what dies of emotion, the image had been sealed upon his heart. Our own Bacon, who well saw the impossibility of reaching it by the combination of many separate beauties, yet explains not the nature of that "kind of felicity" to which he attributes success. I suppose those who have conceived and wrought the loveliest things, have done so by no theorizing, but in simple labour of love, and could not, if put to a bar of rationalism, defend all points of what they had done; but painted it in their own delight, and to the delight of all besides; only always with that respect of conscience, and "fear of swerving from that which is right, which maketh diligent observers of circumstances, the loose regard whereof is the nurse of vulgar folly; no less than Solomon's attention thereunto was, of natural furtherances, the most effectual to make him eminent above others, for he gave

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good heed, and pierced everything to the very ground." *

With which good heed, and watching—as the Indians do for the diamond in their washing of sand—for the instants when men feel warmly and rightly, and that with the desire and hope of finding true good in men, and not with the ready vanity that sets itself to fiction instantly, and carries its potter's wheel about with it always; (off which there will come only clay vessels of regular shape after all), instead of the pure mirror that can show the seraph standing by the human body—standing as signal to the heavenly land: † with this heed, and this charity, there are none of us that may not bring down that lamp upon his path of which Spenser sang:—

* Hooker, book v. chap. i. § 2.

† "A man all light, a seraph man,
By every corse there stood.

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"That Beauty is not, as fond men misdeem,
An outward show of things, that only seem;
But that fair lamp, from whose celestial ray
That light proceeds which kindleth lover's fire,
Shall never be extinguished nor decay.
But, when the vital spirits do expire,
Unto her native planet shall retire,
For it is heavenly born and cannot die,
Being a parcel of the purest sky."

"This seraph band each waved his hand,
It was a heavenly sight;
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light."

Ancient Mariner.

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CHAPTER IV.

General Conclusions Respecting the Theoretic Faculty.

1. OF the sources of Beauty open to us in the visible world, we have now obtained a view which, however scanty in its detail, is yet general in its range. Of no other sources than these visible ones, can we, by any effort in our present condition of existence, conceive. For what revelations have been made to humanity inspired, or caught up to heaven, of things to the heavenly region belonging, have been either by unspeakable words, or else by their very nature incommunicable, except in types and shadows; and ineffable by words belonging to earth, for, of things different from the visible, words appro-

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priated to the visible can convey no image. How different from earthly gold the clear pavement of the city might have seemed to the eyes of St. John, we of unreceived sight cannot know; neither of that strange jasper and sardine can we conceive the likeness, which He assumed that sat on the throne above the crystal sea; neither what seeming that was of slaying, that the Root of David bore in the midst of the elders; neither what change it was upon the form of the fourth of them that walked in the furnace of Dura, that even the wrath of Idolatry knew for the likeness of the Son of God. The knowing that is here permitted to us is either of things outward only, as in those it is whose eyes Faith never opened, or else of that dark part that her glass shows feebly, of things supernatural, that gleaming of the Divine form among the mortal crowd, which all may catch if they will climb the sycamore and wait; nor how much of God's

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abiding at the house may be granted to those that so seek, and how much more may be opened to them in the breaking of bread, cannot be said; but of that only we can reason which is in a measure revealed to all, of that which is by constancy and purity of affection to be found in the things and the beings around us upon earth.

2. Now among all those things whose beauty we have hitherto examined, there has been a measure of imperfection. Either inferiority of kind, as the beauty of the lower animals, or resulting from degradation, as in man himself; and although in considering the beauty of human form, we arrived at some conception of restoration, yet we found that even the restoration must be, in some respect, imperfect, as incapable of embracing all qualities, moral and intellectual, at once, neither to be freed from all signs of former evil done or suffered. Consummate beauty, therefore, is not to be

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found on earth, neither is it to be respecting humanity legitimately conceived. But by certain operations of the imagination upon ideas of beauty received from things around us, it is possible to conceive respecting superhuman creatures (of that which is more than creature, no creature ever conceived) a beauty in some sort greater than we see.

3. Of this beauty, however, it is impossible to determine anything until we have traced the imaginative operations to which it owes its being, of which operations this much may be prematurely said, that they are not creative, that no new ideas are elicited by them, and that their whole function is only a certain dealing with, concentrating, or mode of regarding the impressions received from external things: that therefore, in the beauty to which they will conduct us, there will be found no new element, but only a peculiar combination or phase of those elements that we now know;

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and that therefore we may at present draw all the conclusions with respect to the rank of the Theoretic faculty, which the knowledge of its subject matter can warrant.

4. We have seen that this subject matter is referable to four general heads. It is either the record of conscience, written in things external, or it is a symbolizing of Divine attributes in matter, or it is the felicity of living things, or the perfect fulfilment of their duties and functions. In all cases it is something Divine; either the approving voice of God, the glorious symbol of Him, the evidence of His kind presence, or the obedience to His will by Him induced and supported.

All these subjects of contemplation are such as we may suppose will remain sources of pleasure to the perfected spirit throughout eternity. Divine in their nature, they are addressed to the immortal part of men.

5. There remain, however, two points to be

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noticed before I can hope that this conclusion will be frankly accepted by the reader. If it be the moral part of us to which Beauty addresses itself, how does it happen, it will be asked, that it is ever found in the works of impious men, and how is it possible for such to desire or conceive it?

On the other hand, how does it happen that men in high state of moral culture are often insensible to the influence of material beauty; and insist feebly upon it as an instrument of soul culture?

These two objects I shall endeavour briefly to answer; not that they can be satisfactorily treated without that examination of the connection between all kinds of greatness in art, on which I purpose to enter in the third volume. For the right determination of these two questions is indeed the whole end and aim of my labour (and if it could be here accom-

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plished, I should bestow no effort farther), namely, the proving that no supreme power of art can be attained by impious men; and that the neglect of art, as an interpreter of divine things, has been of evil consequence to the Christian world.*

At present, however, I would only meet such objections as must immediately arise in the reader's mind.

6. And first, it will be remembered that I have, throughout the examination of Typical beauty, asserted our instinctive sense of it; the moral *meaning* of it being only discoverable by reflection. Now this instinctive sense of it varies in intensity among men, being given, like the hearing ear of music, to some more than to others: and if those to whom it is given

* (It is extraordinary that these real motives of the book have never been asserted till now, and even here, thus hastily. I had no memory, myself, when I began the revision of the text, that it was anywise so pregnant with design of subsequent works.)

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in large measure be unfortunately men of impious and unreflecting spirit, it is very possible that the perceptions of beauty should be by them cultivated on principles merely *æsthetic*,* and so lose their hallowing power; for though the good seed in them is altogether divine, yet, there being no blessing in the springing thereof, it brings forth wild grapes in the end. And yet these wild grapes are well discernible, like the deadly gourds of Gilgal.

7. There is in all works of such men a taint and stain, and jarring discord, darker and louder exactly in proportion to the moral deficiency; of which the best proof and measure are to be found in their treatment of the human form (since in landscape it is nearly impossible to introduce definite ex-

* (I have italicized the word, that the reader may note the anticipation of the mischief which has since followed from this sect.)

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pression of evil*), of which the highest beauty has been attained only once, and then by no system-taught painter, but by a most holy Dominican monk of Fiesole: and beneath him all fall lower and lower in proportion to their inferior sanctity (though with more or less attainment of that which is noble, according to their intellectual power and earnestness), as Raphaelle in his St. Cecilia, (a mere study of a passionate, dark-eyed, large-formed Italian model); and even Perugino, in that there is about his noblest faces a shortcoming, indefinable; an absence of the full out-pouring of the sacred spirit that there is in Angelico; traceable, I doubt not, to some deficiencies and avaricious flaws of his heart, whose consequences in his conduct were such as to give Vasari hope that his lies might

* (I had not seen, at this time, and could not have conceived, the darkness and distortion of the vicious French schools of landscape.)

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stick to him (for the contradiction of which in the main, if there be not contradiction enough in every line that the hand of Perugino drew, compare Rio; * and note also what Rio has singularly missed observing, that Perugino, in his portrait of himself in the Florence Gallery, has put a scroll into the hand, with the words "Timete Deum," thus surely indicating what he considered his duty and message): and so all other even of the sacred painters, not to speak of the lower body of men in whom, on the one hand, there is marked sensuality and impurity in all that they seek of beauty, as in Correggio and Guido; or, on the other, a partial want of the sense of beauty itself, as in Rubens and Titian, exhibited in the adoption of coarse types of feature and form; sometimes also (of which I could find instances in modern times) by a want of evidence and delight in what they do; so that, after they had rendered

* De La Poésie Chrétienne. Forme de l'Art.

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some passage of exceeding beauty, they will suffer some discordant point to interfere with it, and it will not hurt them; as if they had no pleasure in that which was best, but had done it in inspiration that was not profitable to them; as deaf men might touch an instrument with a feeling in their heart, which yet returns not outwardly upon them, and so know not when they play false: and sometimes by total want of choice, for there is a choice of love in all rightly tempered men; not that ignorant and insolent choice which rejects half nature as empty of the right, but that pure choice that fetches the right out of everything; and where this is wanting, we may see men walking up and down in dry places, finding no rest; ever and anon doing something noble and yet not following it up, but dwelling the next instant on something impure or profitless with the same intensity and yet impatience, so that they are ever

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wondered at, and never sympathized with; and while they dazzle all, they lead none: and then, beneath these again, we find others on whose works there are definite signs of evil desire ill repressed, and then inability to avoid, and at last perpetual seeking for, and feeding upon, horror and ugliness, and filthiness of sin; as eminently in Salvator and Caravaggio, and the lower Dutch schools, only in these last less painfully as they lose the villainous in the brutal, and the horror of crime in its idiocy.

8. But secondly, it is to be noted that it is neither by us ascertainable what moments of pure feeling or aspiration may occur to men of minds apparently cold and lost, nor by us to be pronounced through what instruments, and in what strangely occurrent voices, God may choose to communicate good to men. It seems to me that much of what is great, and to all men beneficial, has been wrought by

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those who neither intended nor knew the good they did; and that many mighty harmonies have been discoursed by instruments that had been dumb or discordant, but that God knew their stops. The spirit of prophecy consisted with the avarice of Balaam, and the disobedience of Saul. Could we spare from its page that parable, which he said, who saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open; though we know that the sword of his punishment was then sharp in its sheath beneath him in the plains of Moab? or shall we not lament with David over the shield, cast away on the Gilboa mountains, of him to whom God gave *another heart* that day, when he turned his back to go from Samuel? It is not our part to look hardly, nor to look always, to the character or the deeds of men, but to accept from all of them, and to hold fast, that which we can prove good, and feel to be ordained for us.

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We know that whatever good there is in them is itself divine; and wherever we see the virtue of ardent labour and self-surrendering to a single purpose, wherever we find constant reference made to the written scripture of natural beauty, this at least we know is great and good; this we know is not granted by the counsel of God without purpose, nor maintained without result: their interpretation we may accept, into their labour we may enter, but they themselves must look to it, if what they do has no intent of good, nor any reference to the Giver of all gifts. Selfish in their industry, unchastened in their wills, ungrateful for the Spirit that is upon them, they may yet be helmed by that Spirit whithersoever the Governor listeth; involuntary instruments they may become of others' good; unwillingly they may bless Israel, doubtingly discomfit Amalek; but shortcoming

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there will be of their glory, and sure, of their punishment.

I believe I shall be able, incidentally, in succeeding investigations, to prove this shortcoming, and to examine the sources of it; not absolutely indeed (seeing that all reasoning on the characters of men must be treacherous, our knowledge on this head being as corrupt as it is scanty, while even in living with them it is impossible to trace the working, or estimate the errors, of great and self-secreted minds), but at least enough to establish the general principle upon such grounds of fact as may satisfy those who not too severely demand the practical proof (often in a measure impossible) of things which can hardly be doubted in their rational consequence.

9. At present, it would be useless to enter on an examination for which we have no materials; and I proceed, therefore, shortly to reply to that other objection urged against

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the real moral dignity of the faculty, that many Christian men seem to be in themselves without it, and even to discountenance it in others.

It has been said by Schiller, in his letters on æsthetic culture, that the sense of beauty never farthered the performance of a single duty!

Although this gross and inconceivable falsity will hardly be accepted by any one in so many words, seeing that there are few who do not receive, and know that they receive, at certain moments, strength of some kind, or rebuke, from the appealings of outward things; and that it is not possible for a Christian man to walk across so much as a rood of the natural earth, with mind unagitated and rightly poised, without receiving strength and hope from some stone, flower, leaf, or sound, nor without a sense of a dew falling upon him out of the sky;

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though, I say, this falsity is not wholly and in terms admitted, yet it seems to be partly and practically so in much of the doing and teaching even of holy men, who in the recommending of the love of God to us, refer but seldom to those things in which it is most abundantly and immediately shown; though they insist much on His giving of bread, and raiment, and health (which He gives to all inferior creatures), they require us not to thank Him for that glory of His works which He has permitted us alone to perceive: they tell us often to meditate in the closet, but they send us not, like Isaac, into the fields at even; they dwell on the duty of self-denial, but they exhibit not the duty of delight.

10. Now there are reasons for this, manifold, in the toil and warfare of an earnest mind, which, in its efforts at the raising of men from utter loss and misery, has often but little time or disposition to take heed of anything more

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than the mere life, and of those so occupied it is not for us to judge; but I think, that of the weaknesses, distresses, vanities, schisms, and sins, which often, even in the holiest men, diminish their usefulness, and mar their happiness, there would be fewer if, in their struggle with nature fallen, they sought for more aid from nature undestroyed. It seems to me that the real sources of bluntness in the feelings towards the splendour of the grass and glory of the flower, are less to be found in ardour of occupation, in seriousness of compassion, or heavenliness of desire, than in the turning of the eye at intervals of rest too selfishly within; the want of power to shake off the anxieties of actual and near interest, and to leave results in God's hands; the scorn of all that does not seem immediately apt for our purposes, or open to our understanding, and perhaps something of pride, which desires rather to investigate than to feel.

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11. (I believe that the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian Church has ever suffered, has been the effort of men to earn, rather than to receive, their salvation ; and that the reason that preaching is so commonly ineffectual is, that it calls on men oftener to work for God, than to behold God working for them.)* If, for every rebuke that we utter of men's vices, we put forth a claim upon their hearts ; if, for every assertion of God's demands from them, we could substitute a display of His kindness to them ; if, side by side with every warning of death,

* (This eleventh paragraph, as being extremely palatable to everybody, and especially to the amiable Protestant, has been more quoted, I suppose, than any sentence I ever wrote. The first clause of it, now put as a parenthesis, should be at once cancelled, if in this reprint I cancelled anything : but becomes pardonable to me, when I see the general fervour of belief in God's goodness, and man's possible happiness, which runs through all the theology in this volume. The close of the paragraph is good and valuable.)

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we could exhibit proofs and promises of immortality; if, in fine, instead of assuming the being of an awful Deity, which men, though they cannot and dare not deny, are always unwilling, sometimes unable, to conceive, we were to show them a near, visible, inevitable, but all beneficent Deity, whose presence makes the earth itself a heaven, I think there would be fewer deaf children sitting in the market-place.

12. At all events, whatever may be the inability, in this present life, to mingle the full enjoyment of the Divine works with the full discharge of every practical duty, and confessedly in many cases this must be, let us not attribute the inconsistency to any indignity of the faculty of contemplation, but to the sin and the suffering of the fallen state, and the change of order from the keeping of the garden to the tilling of the ground. We cannot say how far it is right, or agreeable with God's

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will, while men are perishing round about us,—while grief, and pain, and wrath, and impiety, and death, and all the powers of the air, are working wildly and evermore, and the cry of blood going up to heaven, that any of us should take hand from the plough; but this we know, that there will come a time when the service of God shall be the beholding of Him; and though in these stormy seas where we are now driven up and down, His Spirit is dimly seen on the face of the waters, and we are left to cast anchors out of the stern, and wish for the day, that day will come, when, with the evangelists on the crystal and stable sea, all the creatures of God shall be full of eyes within, and there shall be "no more curse, but His servants shall serve Him, and shall see His face."

END OF VOL. I.

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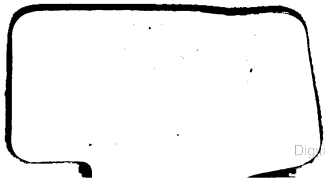
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